

COUNTRY LIFE

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KETURAH-COLLINGS.

VISCOUNTESS CURZON.

71, Park Street, W.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

The Editor will be glad to consider any MSS., photographs, or sketches submitted to him, but they should be accompanied with stamped addressed envelopes for return if unsuitable. In case of loss or injury he cannot hold himself responsible for MSS., photographs, or sketches, and publication in COUNTRY LIFE can alone be taken as evidence of acceptance. The name and address of the owner should be placed on the back of all pictures and MSS.

A GREAT ENGLISHMAN.

NO event of the week equals in importance the death of the Duke of Devonshire, who, in his seventy-fifth year, passed away at Cannes through a failure of the heart. He was one of the few personages who in a high sense moulded the history of our time. Born to high estate, he entered at a very early age upon a political career, and since then he has been almost continually before the eyes of the country. Yet this was far from being due to any desire on his part to claim attention; on the contrary, he had inherited an extraordinary degree of shyness from his father, and he was not troubled by any of those brilliant gifts that distinguished contemporaries like young Benjamin Disraeli and William Ewart Gladstone, who at the time that he entered Parliament were disputing the supremacy in English politics. His virtues were indeed such as commended themselves to Englishmen. He could scarcely be called intellectual, and yet so discriminating was his common-sense and so sound and clear his judgment that the conclusions at which he arrived could not have been bettered by those of greater mental gifts. Withal, he possessed a sincerity of character that was far more convincing than any rhetoric. On a memorable occasion Mr. Gladstone described him as "the very flower of truth and honour." His whole life went to establish the truth of this phrase. No man who ever entered Parliament showed less personal ambition, less desire for self-aggrandisement. As one of the rank and file of the Liberal Party from 1857, until by the death of his father in 1859 he had become Lord Hartington, he performed his duty like a silent soldier in the ranks. It was not till then, indeed, that he made his maiden speech, rendered memorable by the yawn with which it was interrupted, and which caused Disraeli to remark, "He'll do! To any man who can betray such extreme languor under such circumstances the highest post in the gift of the Commons should be open." When he had reached the age of thirty-six years he was made War Secretary at the death of Lord Palmerston.

It was not till 1868 that he began a long association with Mr. Gladstone, which only ended when that erratic genius brought in his first Home Rule Bill. His conduct under Mr. Gladstone was typical of the man. Shy, silent, reserved, no one dreamt in 1875, when Mr. Gladstone retired from the leadership, that Lord Hartington was at all able to fill his shoes. By that time he had

served in several offices, among other things having been Postmaster-General and Chief Secretary for Ireland. But while others seized opportunities to display their powers, he had kept his in reserve, only to be brought out on critical occasions. As Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, however, during the temporary abdication of his chief, he soon began to display such qualities as had been little expected from him. At times the free lances of the Liberal Party seemed to look upon him as a mere figure head, under whom they could do as they liked; but exactly at the right moment he would waken up and show a power of command greater than, or, at least, as great as, that exercised by Mr. Gladstone himself. According to the testimony of all who followed the debates in Parliament at that period, his conduct of the Opposition was at once strong and skilful. The various speeches that he made upon foreign policy and other topics were clear and to the point. They told both with the House and with the country, even though entirely destitute of those graces and artifices which orators know how to impart to their language. The Lord Hartington of those days had no command over the periods of John Bright, who was not so eloquent even as Mr. Cowan. He made no pretence to possess the cunning of the "old Parliamentary hand," and Disraeli's subtlety of intellect was foreign to his nature, while equally so were the flights, jibes and sneers with which Lord Salisbury enforced his arguments in another place. Nevertheless, it is beyond question that Lord Hartington's influence helped greatly to win the battle that dispossessed the Conservatives. It was impossible for him to make any Mid-Lothian pilgrimage such as that performed by Mr. Gladstone; he had no power of working up enthusiasm about Bulgarian outrages, and no art of making the honest finance of Sir Stafford Northcote look as though it were only a pretence of the real thing.

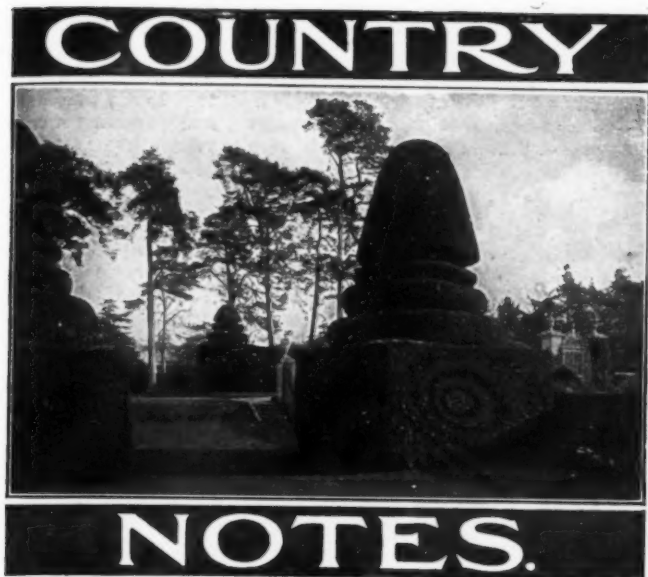
These were Mr. Gladstone's gifts, and his eloquent and innumerable speeches delivered from all sorts of platforms, from the windows of railway carriages and the platforms of huge meetings—all that kind of thing was foreign to the Lord Hartington temperament; yet he produced an impression on the country of absolute and unswerving rectitude and honesty. His speeches even in the hubbub of that great General Election never passed unregarded. When the result of the polls was declared, and Queen Victoria wished him to become her Prime Minister, the self-effacement of the man once more came to the front. He said that Mr. Gladstone had won the battle and Mr. Gladstone should receive the honour. But the events of that fateful Parliament were to bring new thoughts to his head. It was an forgotten and unforgettable hour in his life when the news came that his brother, Lord Frederick Cavendish, had been murdered in Phoenix Park. The tragedy was one to make him shudder, and we cannot wonder if it affected all his subsequent political conduct. When Mr. Gladstone tried to make peace with those who were responsible for the murder by offering them Home Rule, Lord Hartington proudly withdrew from the party, and it was his secession more than anything else that conduced to the defeat of the Bill. When Lord Salisbury was called upon to form a Government he tried to pass the honour on to his new ally, but once more it was refused. The Leader of the Liberal Unionists, as the Party was called which he then formed, gave loyal help to the Conservative allies, but asked for nothing for himself. He became Lord President of the Council in the Salisbury Administration that came into power in 1895. One more opportunity was to be allowed him of showing his disinterestedness; this was when Mr. Chamberlain introduced his scheme of Tariff Reform. It is not our business to pass any verdict upon the Birmingham Programme, but no one on either side can fail to acknowledge that the Duke of Devonshire was acting with his accustomed impartiality and dispassionate sense of justice. Since then he had taken little part in public affairs, but his memory will long endure as that of a great, enlightened and noble Englishman.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Viscountess Curzon. Lady Curzon is the daughter of the late Colonel the Hon. Montagu Curzon, and her marriage to her cousin, Viscount Curzon, the son and heir of Earl Howe, took place in 1907.

The frontispiece in our last week's issue should have been described as the portrait of H.H. Princess Louise Augusta of Schleswig-Holstein, the second daughter of Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein.

* * It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.



PARLIAMENT is never seen to greater advantage than when called upon to pay a tribute to the qualities of one of its illustrious members who has passed away. The speeches delivered in the House of Lords and in the House of Commons on the death of the Duke of Devonshire were in their measured and discriminating praise calculated to make us revise the generally-held opinion that the coming of the democracy has been attended by a loss of dignity to our legislative houses. The speeches were brief, and they accorded with the national character in exhibiting a grave and almost proud moderation. The note running through all was the same. It was first sounded by the Marquess of Ripon when he alluded to the "straightforward sincerity" of the Duke's public life. Lord Lansdowne continued this strain by dwelling on the Duke of Devonshire's uprightness, fearlessness, strength of common-sense and caution. The Earl of Rosebery praised his freedom from "the slightest ultimate personal object or ambition." In the House of Commons Mr. Asquith attained the utmost height of felicity; his terms, as Mr. Balfour said, could not have been "more exquisitely or more fittingly chosen." The Leader of the Opposition is himself at his best on occasion like this.

In our "Correspondence" pages this week there is a letter to which it is desirable that the attention of our readers should be directed. Although the writer prefers to be anonymous, we can assure our readers that he is one whose opinions on matters of this kind are worthy of the most serious attention. His theme is the so-called "improvement" just being carried out in the Chapel of Winchester College. We leave his very lucid remarks and the illustrations by which they are accompanied to tell their own story; but we cannot help expressing an astonishment that is certain to be general at the necessity for such criticism. Winchester yields to no town in England in the wealth of its historical associations, and it possesses a heritage from the past that even Oxford or Cambridge could scarcely rival. Is it not surprising, then, that the inhabitants of this town, so rich in legend and association, should be required to be reminded of the very obvious duty they owe to their contemporaries, no less than to the generations which come after, of maintaining unimpaired those buildings which are their inheritance from the past? It might have been expected that they would have watched over them with jealous and vigilant care.

Mr. John Burns, whatever else may be said of him, possesses a robust common-sense, and he gave his hearers a healthy reminder the other night that those who talk about the magnitude of our infant mortality are in the habit of exaggerating. What it amounts to is 132 per thousand, but this is less than occurs in the leading countries of Europe. In Germany the mortality amounts to as much as 204, in Italy 172, in Belgium 155, and in France 137. Granted, then, that the English rate is still much higher than it ought to be, we have still to remember that here, as elsewhere, Great Britain takes the lead in matters of health. Progress is proceeding along the right lines. Since the year 1870 the general death rate has dropped from 22 to 15 per thousand, and, as the President of the Local Government Board remarked, "they could not pull down the general rate without affecting the infant rate." As a matter of fact, the latter has dropped considerably during that period; but comparison is rendered difficult by the fact that there has also been a shrinkage of the birth-rate, which has fallen from 35 to 27. Mr. John Burns does not regard this as a bad sign. He said "he was not appealing for a desolating flood of babies." In 1870 the

infant mortality was 153 per thousand as against 132 in 1906. It is curious to remark that London, judged by statistics, is healthier than the rural districts. At the end of the first month of child life London and the country are equal, and later, although the comparison is in favour of the country, but not greatly so, from which the inference would appear to be that Mr. John Burns is justified in considering town life just as healthy as country life.

In all this there is no desire to advocate the policy of stagnation. What has been accomplished must be regarded only as an earnest of what shall be done. The analysis of the cause of death made by Mr. John Burns deserves careful study, because it comes from one who has an intimate and first-hand knowledge of what he is talking about. The main cause he considers to be the habit of the working-class mother to do her marketing on Friday, Saturday or Monday, and to return late from visits to relatives on Sunday. This means that the child is often taken out between eight and twelve o'clock at night and receives a chill in its mother's arms. Catarrh, convulsions or heart failure follows, induced by exposure to the cold night air. Another cause of infant mortality is that many labouring women are obliged to go to their tasks immediately before and immediately after the child is born. The mother at this period ought to have at least twelve months' exemption from outside toil. Then Mr. Burns made a little poem in praise of milk. The mother's milk is certainly the best; but if cow's milk must be given, it should be clean and free from disease, carried in clean churns, stored in clean places and conveyed to the baby's mouth in clean vessels. Here the President of the Local Government Board was laying down unquestionable truths. Milk is indeed the most nutritious food, and at the same time the most liable to carry germs. The production of a pure milk supply has an intimate connection with any hope of decrease of infant mortality.

THE PATHETIC FALLACY.

MARCH.

Bare branches black against the sky—
A sagging sky of sullen grey—
The river racing reckless by—
And my True-love far away.

APRIL.

Bare branches burgeoning again,
A hint of blue—a gleam that charms—
The rippling river's April strain—
And my True-love in my arms!

GEORGINA B. PAGET.

At a time when the business of the country appears to be receiving a very decided check, it seems extraordinary that local bodies should be encouraged to undertake a largely-increased expenditure. Yet the changes made during the last session of Parliament are evidently going to make a difference either to the rates or to the Imperial taxes. Take, for example, the medical inspection of schools. From a variety of local papers we notice that a considerable number of medical men have been already appointed to do this work, and at a rough calculation the average salary given them appears to be about £280 a year, to which must be added travelling expenses. Some county councils have allocated a lump sum of about £150 for the purpose; others have resolved more cautiously to pay the expenses as they occur; but in any event it is obvious that the medical officer who is chosen to examine the scholars will cost those who pay rates or taxes over £400 a year at the lowest computation.

A few counties have been much more generous, although it is very evident from the meetings of ratepayers that have been held up and down the country that this lavishness is not endorsed by them. Again, the Small Holdings Act is providing comfortable posts for a number of people. Many counties have engaged a surveyor, at something not far short of the salary paid a medical officer, to superintend carrying out this new measure. Possibly this expense may be justifiable, but it is right and proper that the British householder should be brought to look it in the face, and to enquire for himself to what extent he is likely to receive an adequate return for the money laid out.

Not altogether to be envied is the task of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales. This will be seen by a perusal of the recently-issued annual report, particularly that part of it which deals with the William Whiteley charities. It requires no great effort of sympathetic imagination to see that the utmost care ought to be exercised in order that those who meditate leaving any part of their property for charitable objects should not be in any wise discouraged or made to think that their desires will be thwarted and the funds applied to other purposes. Yet the Charity Commissioners feel constrained to pass a number of adverse criticisms on the magnificent bequests

left by Mr. Whiteley. Among these were included a sum of about £1,000,000 for the establishment of homes for the aged poor, and £5,000 that was to be invested so as to produce about £200 a year which should be distributed in doles of £1 each to 200 poor persons. When such distributions are made by living persons, the Charity Commissioners think they may be useful, but they go on to say that "the experts are agreed on the waste of money involved in gifts of this kind, administered by trustees." This may be so, but the plain citizen will not be inclined to take all that the experts say as gospel. In these days, when so much is required to relieve distress, there surely ought to be a means discovered of applying this fund for the benefit of the community.

It is scarcely to be imagined that anyone will grudge the pension that has been given to Dr. Hall Edwards of Birmingham; indeed, the only feature in the incident that gives rise to surprise is the smallness of the amount. Dr. Hall Edwards is suffering for his devotion to the cause of humanity. While the X-rays were still only half understood, they caused him the most intense pain and illness, which have been borne with more than stoical philosophy. In his case the awarding of a pension is a very inadequate payment for the services he has rendered, and the sacrifice of health and strength which he has very willingly and cheerfully endured. Obviously, however, the sum of £120 per annum can go but a very little way towards the alleviation of those ills to which his labours have subjected him, to say nothing about the provision of that comfort and ease to which he is so highly entitled. If we compare the amount of the pension given to a pioneer of science with that enjoyed by politicians and others who have not done so much to deserve it, it is scarcely possible to say that the British Government is distinguished for its patronage of science.

A definite sign of the arrival of spring is announced by the coming of the chiff-chaff. This is one of our earliest migrants, and the sound of its cheery, if somewhat monotonous, little note is very welcome after the long and hard winter. Other early-nesting birds may now be seen working at their domestic duties. Thrushes, robins, blackbirds, hedge-sparrows, all the small feathered little people that we have fed with crumbs in the garden during the short, hard days of December, January and February, are now merrily engaged gathering material for their nests or piping their merriment from hedge and fruit tree. During the warm days, too, butterflies that have been torpid during winter have been enticed out into the sunshine, and even the bees in much larger number than usual may be heard humming about in the first spring flowers. As if understanding the needs of all these tiny creatures, March that came in so stormily is going out like the proverbial lamb.

To anyone living in a country of sheep pasturage which is at the same time a country of gorse bushes, the lateness of spring is more apparent than its arrival. This lateness, it may be noted, is due to the arrest of progress which is the consequence of recent cold. Previously to the spell of cold, that is to say, up to the middle of February, the season was by no means late, much the reverse. A sign of it is that the lambs are not yet being attracted by the tender gorse shoots. In the places where sheep and gorse grow together the stranger will often be puzzled by the topiary of the gorse bushes, the lower part being full and close, in the form of a crinolined petticoat, the upper spreading out umbrella-wise, in the likeness of a weeping willow. The explanation is that the sheep, and especially the lambs, browse close the tender shoots which they are able to reach, and so keep this lower part close clipped; but the upper they cannot reach, so it grows unchecked as Nature meant. Generally by this date the lambs are at work on the shoots which are not yet strong enough to prick them; but this year the young growth has not yet begun, and the lambs, after a few tentative plucks, go away disgusted, as if with smarting noses.

A distinguished Northern contemporary is instituting or fostering a crusade, with which we have to confess ourselves in the most cordial sympathy, against the sale of fresh-water trout. We know that there are persons who will strongly dissent from us, but believe, for all that, that we are voicing the opinion of the very large majority, and of the most appreciative palates, when we express the opinion that, save for very exceptional cases, the trout of the fresh water is a tasteless, insipid fish on the table. The *chefs* of certain small *auberges* in the more mountainous districts of France seem to have a special skill in its cooking which makes it quite a different fish from that which we know in this country. Exception even here has to be made in the case of the tiny fish of Highland burns, Devonshire moor-streams and the like, but those are worth no man's bringing to market. But the trout is so delectable and piquant a fish in the rivers, when

once he is *piqué* at the end of a rod and line, that we should be much in sympathy with a law forbidding his exposure for sale, the more so as it is very certain that a vast majority of the trout so exposed have been caught in a manner which, if legal at all, is certainly not sporting. It is hardly necessary to say that to the man who himself has caught trout in the really sporting way the flavour of that particular fish will have merits peculiarly its own.

On Monday night the Postmaster-General gave a satisfactory and almost glowing account of the effect of the new Canadian post instituted last May. Its effect has been a great multiplication of the number of magazines and periodicals sent from the United Kingdom to Canada. The estimate is that every week 170,000 of these publications are despatched through the Post Office, making nearly 9,000,000 per annum—in other words, the number of magazines sent to our friends in the Dominion is more than doubled. Moreover, Mr. Buxton has been informed on what he considers good authority that the increase has been greatest in the case of magazines of high class. In answer to a question addressed to him by Mr. Lee, he also stated that the pecuniary loss incurred had been very slight, so that it only seems reasonable to hope that after the increase has reached a certain point the loss will disappear altogether and give way to a profit. At any rate, pecuniary considerations are the least important in this matter; the great point is that by these means the Canadians are brought into touch with the best thought of the Mother Country and the Imperial bond of union is strengthened.

THE SONG.

*"Tout Passe—L'art robuste
Seul a l'éternité."*—THEOPHILE GAUTIER.

As the flower's perfumed semblance
Round the wilted petals hang,
(Old the saying) broods remembrance
Over songs loved voices sang.

Facile mourners in December,
Scents that to May's flower belong!
Easy, easy to remember
The dear singer, in the song!

Of it reverted, past concealing
Memory's face grows grey with ruth;
Rarer, the words' grace, revealing
Beauty in their form and truth.

Scentless flowers harder perish,
Blooms that grow both fair and strong;
In the words enduring, cherish
Not the singer, but the song.

ERIC CLOUGH-TAYLOR.

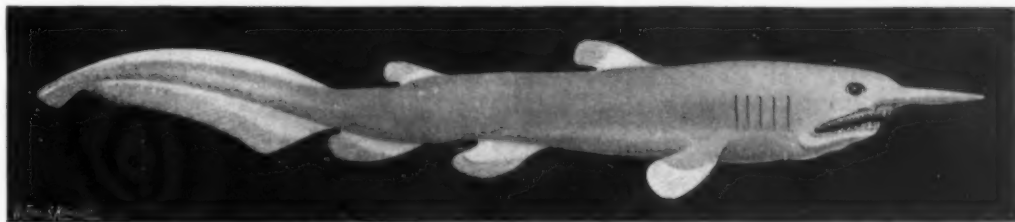
After a great struggle full of thrilling incident Scotland beat England at Inverleith last Saturday by 16 points to 10. It was a great struggle, but, reading between the lines, it was not great football behind the scrum, though Mr. Williamson continually opened the game for his three-quarters. Neither north nor south of the Tweed do the prominent clubs seem to be able to grasp and carry out the principles, adherence to which alone can make the four three-quarter game a success. Straight running is interpreted as "straight to the touch line" instead of to the opposing three-quarter; hard two-handed passing waist high is rarely seen, and in the enemy's twenty-five the three-quarters edge up level with, and far too close to, the scrum. Both Scotch and English forwards played a magnificent game, and if the English full-back's play was not compared favourably with that of Mr. Wood, that is no disgrace to him, for we have rarely seen a more finished performance than that of the Gloucestershire player against Ireland at Richmond.

Some of the chicken-stealing fraternity seem lately to have devised what is something like a new departure in the way of carrying on their business. The plan of campaign has occasionally something in it which is almost Napoleonic in its breadth of conception. The mode seems to be (we are not, unhappily, in their confidence) to plan a raid in many more or less adjacent poultry-yards for a single night, moonless by preference. The premises, of course, have been well reconnoitred beforehand. Several distinct bands, with one or two foragers in each, are despatched to these previously-marked yards from a certain headquarters, which is the halting-place of the cart in which the pillagers have been brought to the centre of the scene of their exploits, and to which they will return with their spoils when they have gathered them. If the raid is a success, there will be general lamentation in the morning, about chickens lost, over a wide area. Locking up the houses is an obvious means of protection, and the hen-wife should read her classics, remember how Rome was saved by the Capitoline geese, and that ducks with their quacking may often do the service of watch-dogs.

REMARKABLE TYPES OF ABYSSAL FISHES.

INTEREST in the abyssal fishes has been revived through the recent publication of Professor Brauer's report on the ichthyological results of the German Valdivia Expedition, which has added so greatly to our knowledge of the deep-sea fauna; the tragic end of King Carlos of Portugal has drawn wider attention to the work of one who devoted much of his leisure to the study of the piscine inhabitants of the great depths close to the coasts of his kingdom; while the frequent appearance on our markets of strange-looking creatures brought from the Bay of Biscay by steam trawlers causes much enquiry as to their nature and relationships on the part of the more observant of the non-scientific public, as well as from those interested in the sale of fish. Having recently given a lecture on abyssal fish-life before that flourishing society, the British Sea Anglers, it occurred to me that an illustrated article on this topic should prove interesting to many readers of these pages. I have, with the kind sanction of Professor Brauer, reproduced some of the excellent pictures of the Valdivia Fish Report, and prepared some photographs from actual specimens in the Natural History Museum, which contains one of the finest collections of deep-sea fishes, rendered famous by Dr. Günther's volume in the Challenger series. I have also reproduced as the first illustration the figure given by the late King of Portugal of a new shark described by him under the name of *Odontaspis nasuta*.

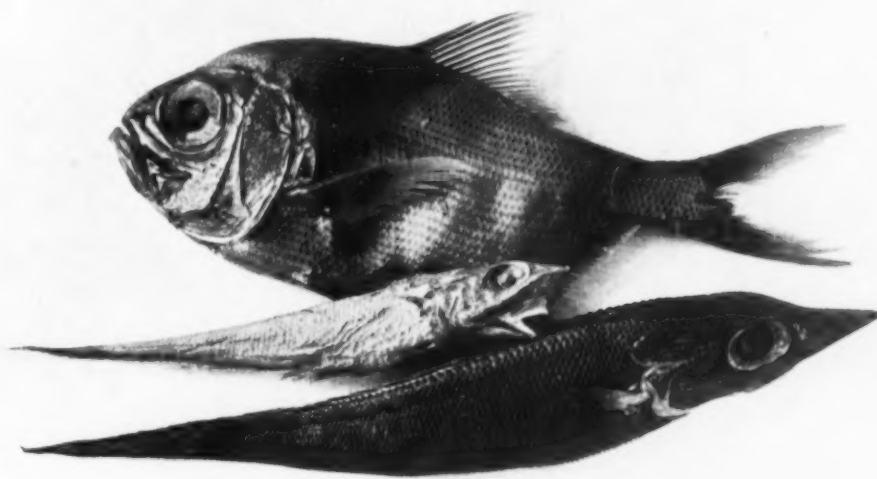
Before dealing with its piscine inhabitants, I should say a few words of the great depths of the sea and of the conditions that prevail there. It is only within the last half century that scientific investigation of these great depths and of their inhabitants has been systematically carried out. But for at least two centuries before, Portuguese fishermen at Setubal had been using lines to a depth of about 600 fathoms (3,600ft.), mostly for



COLOURLESS SHARK: FOUND OFF PORTUGAL AT A DEPTH OF 325 FATHOMS.

procuring kinds of dog-fish, which were indeed of very little value for food, but whose liver yielded a low-class burning oil and the rough skin shagreen for polishing purposes or as a covering for the handles of swords. In Madeira, also, fishermen captured fish by hooks on strong lines weighted with stones to a depth of 300 fathoms to 400 fathoms, the fish sought being chiefly a sort of sea-perch (*Polyprium cernium*), of which adult specimens, weighing from 30lb. to 100lb., seldom appear on the surface.

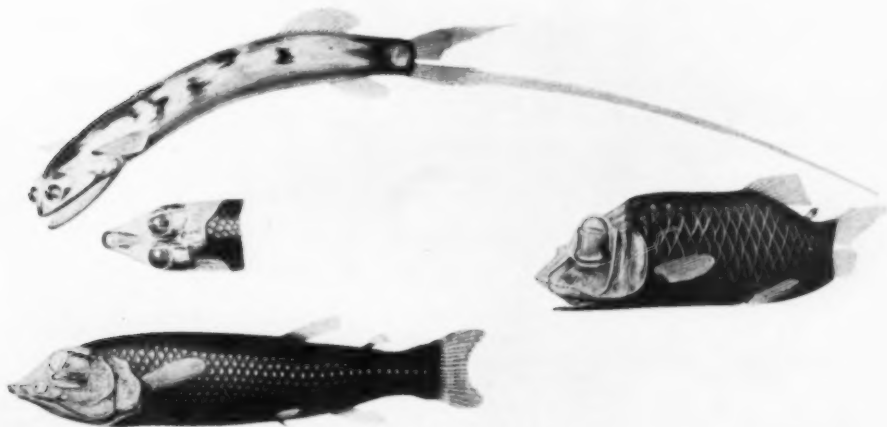
Overlooking these facts, many naturalists still believed fifty years ago that life did not extend to a greater depth than about 1,300ft. Vague notions prevailed as to the depths of the ocean. Now that numerous soundings have been carried out over the greater part of the world, we know the greatest depth to be nearly 31,000ft., somewhat more than the height of the loftiest mountains. This has been ascertained in the Western Pacific, at the Ladrone Islands. The greatest depth of the Mediterranean



BERYX AND TWO SPECIES OF MACRURUS: BAY OF BISCAY.

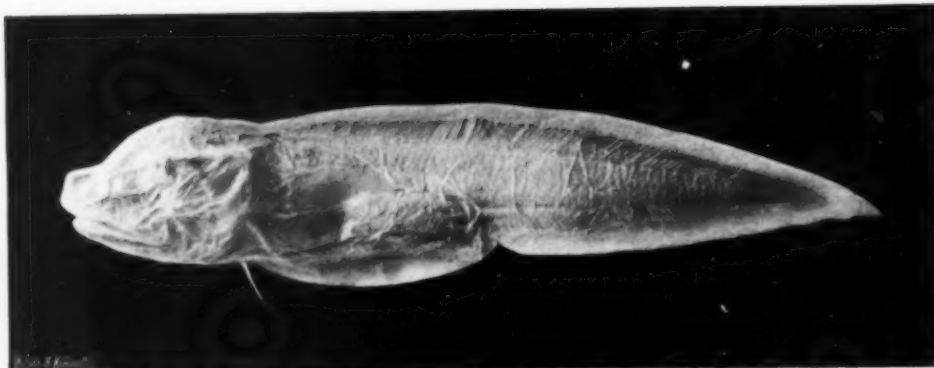
is only about 13,000ft. Very often the greatest depths are near the continents, just as the highest mountains are often near the coasts. On the whole, the depressions of the bottom of the sea are very similar to the relief of the land areas. As we reach lower and lower depths, the water becomes colder; the warm water, being less dense, remains at the surface. At about 12,000ft. the temperature is little above the freezing-point of fresh water. Light gradually disappears, and at 1,400ft. absolute darkness prevails; and as no plant can live without light, the vegetable kingdom is unrepresented, except by some boring algae which have been dredged from a depth of over 3,000ft. and the dead remains of the surface forms which, like rain, keep pouring down to the lower strata and afford food to the endless small invertebrates which are preyed upon by the fishes. Further, there are no currents, oxygen is scarce and uniformity of temperature prevails. No wonder that animals fitted to live under such conditions should differ widely from those occurring near the surface.

The first scientific information on life at great depths was furnished by the investigations of Michael Sars, the great Norwegian zoologist, soon to be followed by the Bull-Dog expedition of 1860, during which Dr. Wallich explored the deep sea about Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland, between 600ft and 2,000ft., and by that of the Porcupine in 1868-70, under the direction of Sir Wyville Thompson, which proceeded as far as the Mediterranean, and for the first time used



TELESCOPIC-EYED FISH: GULF OF GUINEA: AT 1,800—2,500 FATHOMS.

the dredge to a depth of nearly 15,000ft. The success attained by these, and other small expeditions organised by Sir Wyville Thompson, induced the British Government to get up the costly and famous expedition of the Challenger, which, under the scientific direction of the same zoologist, extended its investigations over the greater part of the world, and lasted from 1872 to 1878. From that time other nations followed suit, and America, France, Norway, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Portugal and Monaco have contributed to our knowledge of the inhabitants of the deep. One of the most important recent expeditions has been that organised by the German Government under the lead of Professor Chun, and known as the Valdivia expedition, which started in 1898 and returned to Hamburg in 1899 with important treasures now being worked out by a phalanx of specialists, and of which the report on the fishes was issued a year ago. The Valdivia devoted herself mainly to an investigation of the great depths in the Southern Hemisphere, thus supplementing the work already done by the Challenger and the Indian Investigator. The apparatus for capturing animals has been greatly perfected, and all sorts of contrivances have been devised for securing them and for recording the exact depth at which they are captured. In the earlier days of deep-sea operations, no precautions were taken to keep the mouth of the dredge or tow-net closed during its ascent or descent, so that there was no guarantee as to the depth at which the animals were captured. Now some of the apparatus are real traps, which only open when reaching the bottom and automatically close when hauled up, thus making it quite certain that nothing enters between the surface and the bottom. The Prince of Monaco, who has devoted much of his leisure and wealth to oceanography, is the inventor of several ingenious devices by which he has succeeded in procuring fish



BLIND COLOURLESS FISH.

From South Pacific: 1,400 fathoms.

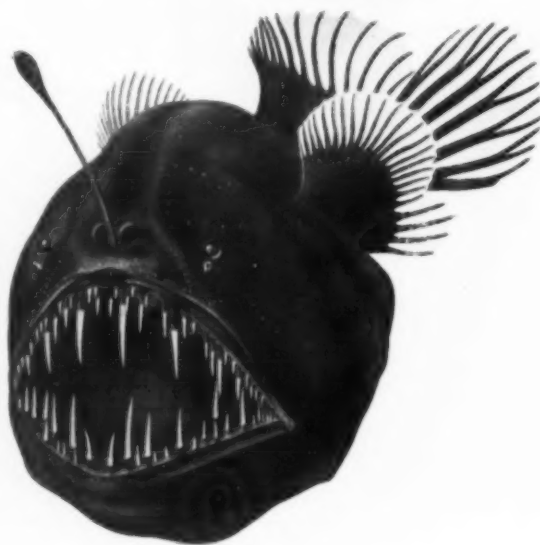
which had eluded the trawl, and it may be mentioned in this connection that a sort of lobster-pot which he experimented upon in the North Atlantic secured representatives of a rare eel (*Simenchelys parasitica*), previously known from a few examples

found off the East Coast of the United States, some of them partly embedded in the muscles of halibut (hence the name *parasitica*), on which they prey. As an example of the abundance in which some fishes may be procured when we know the right thing to use for the purpose, it is noteworthy that whenever this eel-trap was let down to depths varying between 500ft. and 1,000ft. such quantities of the *Simenchelys* were captured that hundreds had to be thrown overboard; yet it is otherwise hardly ever caught, and but for the Prince's invention most museums would probably still be without an example of this curious species.

Now that the bathymetrical distri-

bution of animals has by these improved methods been made a subject of more accurate study, it is possible to divide deep-sea fishes into two main groups: the benthonic, which live on the bottom, and the bathypelagic, which are independent of the bottom and occur below the 100-fathom line, which has usually

been taken as the arbitrary limit of the deep sea. Needless to say, this is an arbitrary limit, as some coast and pelagic fishes descend to considerable depths at certain seasons, or for the purpose of breeding, while various bathypelagic forms are known to rise to the surface at night. In accordance with the mode of life necessitated by the conditions described above, the visual organs have become modified. The eyes are either enormous, to make the most of the little light furnished by luminous organisms, or very much reduced, even entirely lost, many deep-sea animals being blind, like those that inhabit caves where light does not penetrate. As examples of fishes with enormous eyes, two kinds of *Macrurus* are here shown in the second illustration, frequently brought of late years to our markets by steam trawlers from the Bay of Biscay. They are allies of our cod family, but devoid of an expanded tail-fin, the tail terminating in a long, fine point, whence the name *Macrurus* (long tail). The family of the *Macrurus* is entirely confined to the deep sea, of which it is one of the most characteristic types; about 120 species are known, and many have a wide distribution. *Macrurids* have been found in all the seas where deep-sea fishing has been practised at depths varying between 300 fathoms and 2,650 fathoms. The flesh is said to be very good eating, but the somewhat



WITH LIGHT-BEARING TENTACLE ON HEAD.

Indian Ocean: 1,250 fathoms.



CORYNOLOPHUS, ANOTHER FISH WITH LUMINOUS ORGAN.

repulsive appearance of these creatures is against their sale. Another fish with large eyes now often seen in fishmongers' shops along with the *Macrurus*, and which may be highly recommended for the table, is *Beryx*, often misnamed, from its bright scarlet colour, red sea-bream. It is no sea-bream at all, but a very interesting representative of a group of primitive perches which flourished in the cretaceous period and appear to have been the immediate precursors of the true perches; they have left comparatively few survivors, several of which are confined to the deep sea. The eyes of these fishes are, as usual, lateral.



PHOTOSTOMIAS WITH LUMINOUS SPOTS.

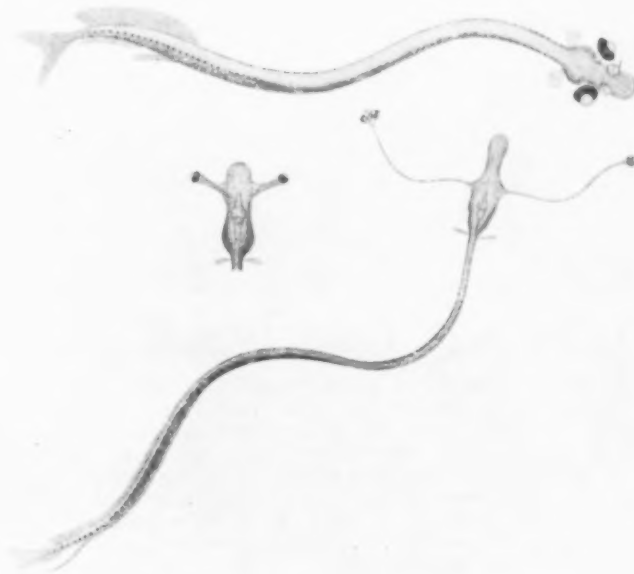
From the Azores at a depth of 300 fathoms.

A few others, such as *Gigantura*, *Wintaria* and *Opisthoproctes*, shown in the third picture, from the Valdivia Report, are provided with telescopic eyes, eyes in the form of short cylinders which protrude from their sockets and are directed forwards or upwards like a pair of opera-glasses—rare examples of binocular vision in fishes.

Having alluded to fishes with enormous eyes, we may pass at once to the other extreme, and mention such as have no eyes at all. Such blind fishes are *Typhlonus*, a relative of the little blennies or shannies of our rock pools, discovered at a depth of 2,440 fathoms, and its ally *Aphyonius*, not only blind but colourless, flesh-coloured in life. This latter is shown in the fourth illustration, and stands very near to the Cuban cave fishes, *Stygicola* and *Lucifuga*. As absence of light precludes the existence of the vegetable world, abyssal fishes are all carnivorous, some even cannibals; this accounts for the huge mouth of so many of them and their often formidable dentition. Some have been captured that had succeeded in swallowing another fish much larger than themselves, a feat of gluttony which cost them their life, as such examples have been found dead or dying on the surface of the sea. The huge teeth are usually hinged and freely depressible backwards. Others with an enormous mouth, such as *Megalopharynx* and *Saccopharynx*, have weak jaws, and the body is a loose sac which may envelop a large prey and surround it like an india-rubber pouch. As pointed out by Dr. Günther, such fishes cannot be said to swallow their prey, but rather to draw themselves over their victim, in the fashion of sea-anemones. This enormously distensible pouch-like belly is also characteristic of our angler or fishing-frog (*Lophius piscatorius*), which is represented by extraordinary-looking forms in the deep sea. These were formerly believed to be bottom fishes, concealing themselves partially in the mud and waiting in ambush for fishes attracted by the alluring organ or appendage surmounting their head, and which are then engulfed in the huge mouth. But this habit was simply surmised from the conformation of the fish, for, needless to say, they have never been observed alive, and never will be, for they live in complete darkness at a depth inaccessible to the observer, and only reach the surface dead or in a dying condition. The recent captures made by the Valdivia expedition induce Dr. Brauer to regard these fish not as benthonic, but as bathypelagic. In *Melanotus*, here figured, the rostral appendage terminates into a knob with a luminous organ. *Corynolophus*, in the next picture, has the appendage more massive and branched like a tree. Tactile filaments, as appendages of the fins, are developed in some bathybial fishes (e.g., *Bathypterois*), in which the eyes are small, and they are probably of help as organs of touch in seeking for food in darkness. A coast fish (*Polynemus*) is provided with similar tactile filaments, and their function is rendered obvious by the fact that the fish

lives chiefly at the mouths of rivers where the water is thick and muddy, and its eyes are obscured by a thick, semi-transparent lid. Darkness explains why all deep-sea fishes are either red or of a very dark colour, brown or even quite black, or else silvery white or colourless, and always devoid of those beautiful or curious markings which render so many of their surface congeners attractive to the eye. It also accounts for the possession by many of luminous organs, phosphorescent spots on the body or head, or on the barbels or tentacles, which are connected with the nervous system, and the luminous or oxidising power of which is more or less under their control. Some are furnished with lenses like a bullseye lantern, and the light may be white, green or red. These organs are no doubt useful in enabling the fishes to find each other in the darkness and also in attracting prey. In *Photostomias* there is a large, luminous spot (photophore) on the side of the head and two series of smaller ones on the side of the body.

The enormous pressure abyssal fishes have to bear—pressure amounting to upwards of a ton weight on each square inch of surface at a depth of 1,000 fathoms (6,000ft.), or, as Sir Wyville Thompson puts it, at 2,000ft. a man would bear upon his body a weight equal to twenty locomotive engines each with a goods train loaded with pig-iron—has resulted in a special conformation of their tissues. Their osseous and muscular systems are, as compared with surface fishes, very feebly developed. The bones have a fibrous, cavernous texture, with very little lime. They also contain a greater proportion of gases in solution. Therefore, when these fishes are hauled up from great depths the tissues are often distended and ruptured; the air-bladder often protrudes through the mouth, and the eyes are pushed out of their sockets. In consequence, many of the deep-sea fishes in one collection are in a much-damaged condition. A recently-discovered extraordinary larval form with stalked eyes is *Stylophorus*, shown in the last illustration, obtained by the Valdivia in the Indian Ocean at depths of



STYLOPHORUS.

Which in earlier stages wears its eyes at the end of pedicels.

700 fathoms to 1,000 fathoms. At a later stage of development it resembles the hammerhead shark. Of what sort of fish this is in the larval form is still a mystery. By larval form is meant a post-embryonic, free-living stage, which diverges very markedly in structure and in habits from the normal cycle of development. As a rule, fish-try are only diminutive images of the adult fish. The best examples of what is meant by a larva are the tadpole, so unlike the frog into which it transforms before leaving the water, and the caterpillar, an object of repulsion to many owing to its creeping habits and

worm-like shape, which turns into one of the most beautiful creatures Nature produces. Such metamorphoses are, however, rare in fishes, although we have an example in our eel, which before assuming its well-known shape lives for a long time under the form known as *Leptocephalus*—band-like, transparent creatures with colourless blood, so transparent as to be hardly visible when swimming in a glass jar, and so different from an eel that the correlation between the two has only recently been established. We are so accustomed to look upon the eel as an inhabitant of fresh waters that it seems almost incredible that it should be included among the denizens of the deep sea. And yet it is now well ascertained that the eel repairs to the sea to breed, this taking place at a depth of about 300 fathoms; and that its larval form, described long ago as *Leptocephalus brevirostris*, is a bathypelagic fish, which, after some months, transforms into an elver, in which condition it migrates from the deeper parts of the ocean to shallow seas, and then ascends rivers in myriads, surmounting all sorts of obstacles, even creeping over land to gain access to inland waters. A wonderful history, of which a brief outline appeared some time ago in this paper.

The case of the eel is exceptional. Most deep-sea fishes never leave the great depths, and as the temperature is uniform and independent of that of the surface, their distribution or range is quite different from that of shallow-water fishes; the same species may occur at such distant points as the Arctic Circle and the tropical part of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. A good instance of this wide range is afforded by the remarkable shark *Chlamydoselachus anguineus*, discovered twenty years ago in the deep sea off the coast of Japan, and which has since turned up at such distant points as the North Coast of Scandinavia, Madeira and Portugal.

We are at present acquainted with over 800 kinds of deep-sea fishes; the greatest depth at which they have been obtained is 2,500 fathoms (16,500 ft.). At anything like that depth life becomes extremely scarce, and it is doubtful whether it extends at all beyond 20,000 ft. Before much was known of the inhabitants of the deep, it was surmised that we should find among them forms fundamentally different from those which live on the surface, and that types which flourished in previous geological epochs, and believed to be now extinct, would be found to have maintained themselves in the abysses. No less an authority than the celebrated Louis Agassiz, before embarking on the *Hastar* in 1872, to explore the North-East Coast of South America, felt sanguine of discovering at great depth allies of the trilobites, ammonites and ganoid fishes. Nothing of the kind has come to light. All the aberrant deep-sea forms are only modifications, not amounting to more than family rank in classification, of the surface forms, from which they are believed to be genetically derived, and with which many of them are, in fact, completely connected by a number of intermediate types. As regards size, monsters are conspicuous by their absence. Fishes of the deep sea are of comparatively small size. Leaving aside sharks and eel-shaped forms, the largest deep-sea fish is only 5 ft. long. Our knowledge is now sufficiently advanced to enable us to state that it is not possible to characterise the abyssal fauna by the presence of special large groups, but only by the perfectly gradual modifications, mostly parallel or analogous, which animals of various divisions have undergone to meet the requirements of the special conditions in which they have been placed. And the study of these modifications has afforded further support to the great theory of evolution.

G. A. BOULENGER.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

THE PRINCESS AND MAUD (Macmillan) is the new volume of the works of Lord Tennyson annotated by the poet and edited by his son. *The Princess*, by the mere lapse of time, has come to be an historical document. It records, at any rate, what a man always abreast of his time thought of the woman question sixty years ago. The most pregnant of Lord Tennyson's comments at the time are contained in a letter which he wrote to Mr. Dawson, a Canadian, who, in 1885, published an annotated edition of the poem. Lord Tennyson begins by complimenting his Canadian editor on having seen that

if women ever were to play such freaks, the burlesque and the tragic might go hand in hand.

It is evident that he would not have had much sympathy with the agitation so crudely got up to-day. His tale of *The Princess* is an imaginative picture of women's rebellion; and his intention was to show that such a rebellion must be futile. The key to his meaning is in the lyrics which deal with children. In the words of the author:

The child is the link thro' the parts, as shown in the Songs (inserted 1850), which are the best interpreters of the poem.

If we turn back to an early criticism of Charles Kingsley's, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for September, 1850, we can see

that the songs were long considered the gems of the piece. Kingsley writes:

At the end of the first canto, fresh from the description of the female college, with its professoresses and hosteleresses, and other Utopian monsters, we turn the page, and—"As through the land at eve we went." . . . "O there above the little grave We kiss'd again with tears." Between the next two cantos intervenes the well-known cradle song, perhaps the best of all; and at the next interval is the equally well-known "Bugle Song," the idea of which is that of twin-labour and twin-fame in a pair of lovers. In the next the memory of wife and child inspirits the soldier on the field; in the next the sight of the fallen hero's child opens the sluices of his widow's tears; and in the last ("Ask me no more") the poet has succeeded in superadding a new form of emotion to a canto in which he seemed to have exhausted every resource of pathos which his subject allowed.

A later criticism would not endorse all this quite so heartily as did Kingsley's readers. There is a very great difference in the merits of the various songs, and some that enjoyed the utmost popularity in mid-Victorian days are not now held in such high repute. Some have that little touch of sentimentality which is a defect in the "May Queen" and other popular writing of the author. "As through the land at eve we went" is an example, and another is "Home they brought her warrior dead." In how many thousands of homes was this sung to the piano in the later portion of the nineteenth century, and how it has fallen out of favour now! Some of the songs, too, are more remarkable for a finished daintiness and an exquisite choice of language than for inspiration. The once famous "Bugle Song," for instance:

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;

is not more than a mere triumph in workmanship. It will be seen that Kingsley inclined to think that the "Cradle Song" was the best of all:

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea.

Here we have fine feeling as well as exquisite workmanship, and yet the poem lacks something of that free, spontaneous grace which we find in the older lullabies. It is a beautiful drawing-room song, but the real lullaby was not sung to the piano but over the cradle. Some of the songs, however, seem to have actually gained by the lapse of time. We cannot imagine the world ever becoming tired of:

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Of it Lord Tennyson says:

This song came to me on the yellowing autumn-tide at Tintern Abbey, full for me of its bygone memories. It is the sense of the abiding in the transient.

It would be difficult to imagine anything more hauntingly pathetic or beautiful than the verse which on its first appearance so greatly impressed Edward FitzGerald:

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Ask me no more" is not without a considerable share of this magic. It has a quality that defies analysis:

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Lord Tennyson, who was the most self-critical of poets, considered that one of the most successful of his lyrics was, "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height." His son says of this:

For simple rhythm and vowel music my father considered this Idyllic song, written in Switzerland—chiefly at Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald—and descriptive of the waste Alpine heights and gorges and of the sweet rich valleys below, as among his most successful work.

It was said to be taken from Theocritus, but the author denied that there was any "real likeness except perhaps in the Greek Idyllic feeling." Indeed, he never wrote four more musical lines than those with which it concludes:

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

On the other hand, the one preceding it, "Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white," is unreal and artificial. Not perhaps on the same level with the best, yet lovely and fine in its own way, is, "O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying"

South." Some of the verses have passed into the very heart of literature:

O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South
And dark and true and tender is the North,

and

Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

It is no wonder that a poem containing so many gems should have been greatly treasured. Not only are these lyrics unforgettable, but in the narrative Tennyson added to the

Jewels five-words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
Sparkle for ever.

Most of the poet's notes deal more with the technique than with the subject of his verse. In the well-known letters to Dawson he traces the connection between certain familiar lines and the incidents that suggested them.

A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight
was suggested by

The sea one night at Torquay, when Torquay was the most lovely seavillage in England, tho' now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon behind it.

This, however, and many other examples of the same thing, have been frequently referred to before. Among the other notes,

minutes, and some mad doctor wrote to me that nothing since Shakespeare has been so good for madness as this.

The beginning of Part IV., "O that 'twere possible," appeared first in the *Tribute* as far back as 1837. Sir John Simeon, years after, begged Tennyson to weave a story round this poem, and that was how *Maud* came into being. The last note in the volume is on the first stanza of Part III. It is as follows:

On the 16th of March, 1854, my father was looking through his study window at the planet Mars "as he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast," and so determined to name his second son, who was born on that day, Lionel.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE PRICE OF GOATS.

THOSE who are endeavouring to solve the pure milk question by keeping goats will find some practical information in the Journal of the Board of Agriculture for mid-March. The rule is laid down by "Home Counties" that the price of a goat should be about a sovereign for each quart of milk it gives daily. Thus, if it gives two quarts daily, £2 would be a fair price; but goats that give more than two quarts are able to command more absolutely and proportionately. A goat that gives five pints, for instance, would be cheap at £2 10s., and a goat that gives a gallon daily could not be purchased for less than £10. The Rev. E. P.



NEAR ROMNEY MARSH.

here is one on the line, "Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not":

When I was in a friend's garden in Yorkshire, I heard a nightingale singing with such a frenzy of passion that it was unconscious of everything else, and not frightened though I came and stood quite close beside it. I saw its eye flashing and felt the air bubble in my ear through the vibration.

This, too, is interesting on the lines, "When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens":

I remember seeing thirty ricks burning near Cambridge, and I helped to pass the bucket from the well to help to quench the fire.

There are only a few pages of notes to *Maud*—in its way a much more vigorous poem than *The Princess*. There is nothing quite so strong in the former as the well-known passage:

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-lecker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home—

Maud was written at Farringford and published in 1855, and Tennyson describes it as

a little *Hamlet*, the history of a morbid, poetic soul, under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age.

Here is a curious note on it:

The whole of the stanzas where he is mad in Bedlam, from "Dead, long dead," to "Deeper, ever so little deeper," were written in twenty

Boys-Smith reckons that 600lb. of milk, say, 2lb. daily, is a fair return for a goat; 2lb. we may reckon as the fifth of a gallon, that is, four-fifths of a quart. From 800lb. to 1,200lb. a year is not an unreasonable yield. He says, very properly, that such goats may be met with at any price between 15s. and £15; as a matter of fact, the practical small holder who purchases goats generally looks to pay from £1 to £1 10s. for one of no particular breed just after it has kidded. He may get it a little cheaper before that on account of risks. Now as to the value of the milk. We know of one goat-keeper who has no difficulty in obtaining 6d. a quart for as much as he can produce, and his customers do not belong to the richest class. They know, however, that goat's milk goes further than cow's milk—in other words, that it contains a larger percentage of butter-fat, and therefore for many purposes can be diluted to advantage, and we need not say that dilution at home is a very different thing from adulteration abroad.

THE DIFFICULTY IN SMALL HOLDINGS.

According to the report of the *Yorkshire Post* a curious dilemma was disclosed at the quarterly meeting of the Lindsey County Council held at Lincoln last Friday. Mr. W. Embleton Fox, on his re-election as chairman, complained that it was disheartening to find that the more meetings (in connection with small holdings) they had, the more difficulties, from a practical point of view, seemed to crop up. Sir Berkeley

Sheffield offered the Council a farm on very favourable terms. It is admittedly suitable for small holdings, and the Council were prepared to take it and adapt it for that purpose. The difficulty that arose was that it would take quite a year to make it ready for the new tenants, and they did not know what to do with it in the meantime. If they farm it themselves they are sure to incur a loss, and if they did that it would probably give rise to grumbling were they compelled to cover it by adding to the rents of the holdings. The Council have been working as far as possible with the Board of Agriculture, who have found the results unsatisfactory. Mr. Fox made the pointed remark that he thought "the supervision of the Act should be in the hands of someone practically acquainted with the difficulties, and not in the hands of the Commissioner of Public Works, whose duty was confined to looking after Royal Palaces and Government offices." What makes the situation still more aggravating is that the Council have received no fewer than 379 applications for small holdings, the total amount applied for being 7,853 acres. Some of the applicants have definitely asked for portions of a farm near Eastville. It belongs to the Duchy of Lancaster, and is at present held by a tenant who has been in it for several years, but who seems to be unwilling to give it up for small holdings. It is said that the farm is about 2,000 acres altogether, but, at the same time, we cannot pretend to sympathise with any attempt to displace a successful farmer for the purpose of trying a difficult and doubtful experiment.

THE SMALL HOLDER'S CAPITAL.

County and parish councils are just coming to the difficult point at which they will find it necessary to decide how far each applicant is qualified by the possession of capital to take up a small holding. It is evident that the standard varies much according to locality. The Small Holdings Committee of the Kesteven County Council in their report gave the opinion that each applicant for a holding should have at least £5 per acre of capital. This is a very modest equipment, but it is better to place it at so much an acre than at a lump sum, as has been done by some county councils, £100 being named, for instance, in one case. The lump sum must surely vary according to the size of the holding. The committee to which allusion has already been made therefore recommend that no house should be built except where the holding exceeds twenty-five acres. The size is well above the average, as 104 applications have been received for 1,596 acres, of which 439½ are grass and the remainder arable. But here, again, it was pointed out that a practical difficulty arose in the way of finding the land, as very little is available and no one in the district wishes to give up what he has. The Council seem to be taking a very sensible and moderate view, and to recognise that only under exceptional circumstances ought a sitting tenant to be dislodged in order to make way for a small holder.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE

THE WILES OF THE HUNTED HARE.

WHEN a hare is found and speeds away from a pack of harriers or beagles, it seems to the uninitiated as if by no possibility could she ever be caught. Yet, as every hare-hunter knows, given a decent pack of hunting hounds, a good scent and not too many hares about to create diversions, in three cases out of four the hounds will steadily wear their quarry down and run into her. A hare has usually so many things in her favour that the average chances are probably something like five to one against hounds killing any particular one that they may start. No beast of chase knows better than the hare how to take care of itself and to baffle hounds. It is almost certain that the animal bustles away, trusting in the first instance mainly to her own magnificent speed and fully confident of shaking off her pursuers. Presently the hare begins to understand that speed alone is not sufficient, that she cannot easily get rid of that resounding chorus behind her, and that other arts must be resorted to. One of the commonest is, of course, the trick of putting up others of her own kind, and so diverting the pack to the chase of a fresh quarry. The wild red deer of Exmoor practises exactly the same manoeuvre, and instances have been known where the disturbed stag, resenting the process of being thus victimised, has actually turned upon the hunted beast and disputed his entry.

THE HARE'S CHANCES.

But the hare has an infinity of other chances, changes and devices. None knows better than she how to make use of cold or dry ploughs where scent lies badly or not at all; or to run through a flock of sheep or over foiled ground; to cross a river or a stream is one of the most favourite devices of this animal when hunted, and a rabbit-warren, a wood carpeted with dry leaves, or a dusty road are other frequent aids to her in her scheme of escape. A wall or even a thick hedge is not infrequently made use of. A hunting friend of mine told me, only a few days since, of a well-run hare which had for the time completely baffled her pursuers. Looking about to see if she had squatted in a hedgerow, he saw her crouching on the very top of the hedge itself; and so determined was she not to vacate her place of vantage that she actually allowed him to push her with his stick and yet refused to budge. Finally she suffered herself to be taken up by the ears and placed on the ground, when she made off again and made good her escape for a short time longer. Mr. L. C. R. Cameron,

author of "Otters and Otter-hunting," is my authority for this curious experience, which actually happened to himself.

A CURIOUS END TO A HARE-HUNT.

The extraordinary and sudden changes in the conditions of scent are factors very greatly in favour of the hare's escape, and of these she makes the best possible use. A sudden storm of sleet or the approach of cold clouds will often change a good scenting morning into a thoroughly bad one. On some days, as every hunter knows, scent lies scarcely at all, even to the keenest of old-fashioned, low-scenting Southern harriers. On such days hunting is a most difficult business; the hare has things pretty much her own way and has little difficulty in running the pack out of the small remnant of scent that remains to them. On other days, when scent is ravishing and hounds run with the fierce cry and the immense dash that tell of the most perfect conditions from their point of view, the hare knows excellently well of her danger, and resorts to the most extraordinary arts and devices to save her life and throw out her pursuers. The fox and the deer, animals which, like the hare, have on ordinary occasions every confidence in their own powers of escape, in like manner know perfectly well that these rare days of magnificent scent are full of danger to them. You may usually tell this by the very way they quit cover and get away. I mentioned last year several instances within my experience of hares going to sea. These instances are not common, and are only resorted to when the animal is extremely hard pressed. On Saturday last (21st) such an incident happened with the Hailsham Harriers, a foot-pack, hunting in East Sussex. The hare, after a good run, went to sea at Pevensey Bay, and going out with the receding tide was soon beyond the reach of hounds, which turned back. The Master, Mr. Alexander Campbell, one of the keenest and best foot-huntsmen in England, then doffed his coat and waistcoat, swam out some 400 yds. and took the hare, which was, by this time, pretty well exhausted.

THE HARE'S ENDURANCE.

Where hares are hunted by a pack of dwarf foxhounds they are often hustled and burst up in short sharp runs of twenty minutes or half-an-hour, without being conceded a chance of displaying the wonderful powers of endurance of which they are capable. This, in my humble opinion, is not real hare-hunting. Without wishing to return to the four and five hour chases which used to delight the old-fashioned hunting-folk of the Sussex Weald and elsewhere in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the "Psalm-singing" Southern hound was in his fullest vogue, one likes to see the hare have a fair chance for her life, without being hustled or hurried to death, as she occasionally is, by unfair methods. The Hailsham Harriers, with which I have the pleasure to hunt, are 21in. or 22in. hounds, mostly of Southern hound ancestry, yet having quite a good turn of speed. On several occasions during the last few months I have carefully timed the runs of strong jack hares on fair scenting days, and I can, therefore, give examples of what a stout hare is capable under such conditions. It is amazing how long and how far good hares will manage to keep afoot before a fleet pack of hounds on grass marshes, especially after the turn of the year. A hare before Christmas and a hare hunted after are usually two very different animals. Why this should be the case has never yet been quite satisfactorily explained.

SOME EXAMPLES.

Early in December, from Horse Eye, in the middle of Pevensey Marsh, we hunted a hare, at a great pace and on an excellent scent, for an hour and a quarter. On this occasion hare and hounds covered not less than eight or nine miles with scarcely a check, twice swimming the Haven, a marsh river. Eight or nine miles at best pace is a pretty good test of stamina for both hare and hounds. Scent was not good during January and part of February, but on the 22nd of the latter month matters suddenly improved, and although it was blowing a gale of wind, scent was splendid in almost every part of Sussex. Again we met at Horse Eye, in the marsh country. Horse Eye is a lonely farmhouse, situated on a little eminence in the middle of the broad Pevensey Levels. Hither, in Saxon days, the horses were driven when the surrounding marshes were under water, the little island (eyot or eye), from which the place takes its name, affording them safety at such seasons. This day we found and hunted a redoubtable jack hare, from which we never changed, and which kept us going at a good rate—often at a very fast pace—for 1hr. 55min. before hounds drove him into the river and killed him. This good hare twice crossed the river, and, of course, negotiated innumerable marsh dykes. From the amount of country traversed and the time occupied, he could not have run less than eleven or twelve miles. That, it must be admitted, is a notable example of a hare's endurance. I have seldom seen a stronger or a pluckier hare than one which these same harriers (the Hailsham) hunted on March 5th this year from their meet at Haukham Hall. Again it was a jack hare, and a real good one, which we found and stuck to for the space of 1hr. 45min. The first half of the run was at a fair hunting pace, over a good deal of plough. Then hounds pushed their quarry down to the marsh, and for close on an hour ran very fast indeed on a burning scent. At the end of this time the leading hounds ran up to their hare and actually gripped him in a large pool of water. The Master jumped in to save the hare, and somehow the hunted beast escaped, almost without injury. By this time the whole pack were up, and for nearly ten minutes they coursed their hare, which ran within a few yards of their nose, in a truly wonderful manner. I never saw anything like it in a long experience of hare and fox hunting. The hare dodged, jinked, twisted and turned and seemed to bear a charmed life. At least four times he ran the gauntlet of the pack, every hound snapping at him as he sped by. Finally, seeming to gain renewed strength, he made one last gallant effort and got clean away again. In 300 yds. or 400 yds. the leading hounds had run up to him once more, and Warrior pulled him down after the most amazing display of endurance I ever saw at the finish of a hare-hunt. Here, again, I compute that the hunted animal and pack could not have compassed less than from nine to ten miles of country. The best hare-hunt and the stoutest hare I ever saw was in the year 1900, when the same pack ran a hare from the sea near Pevensey, straight inland. The point was seven miles and the distance run some fourteen miles. Time, 2hr. 45min., and hounds killed their hare alone. She was saved by two rustics, and when hounds killed she had run through seven parishes.

H. A. B.

THE BLANKNEY HOUNDS AND HORSES.



W. A. Rouch.

THE DOG PACK.

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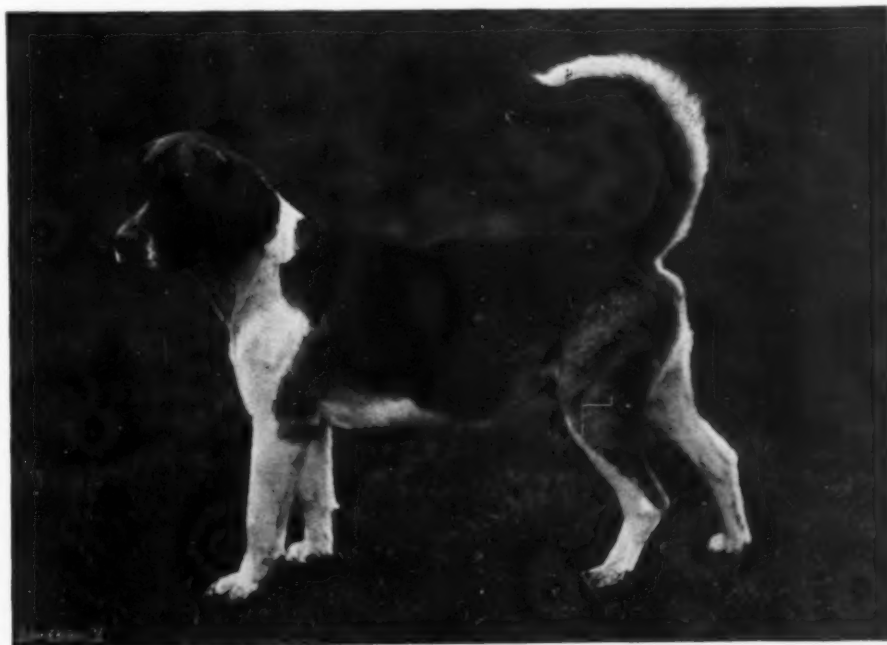
LORD HENRY BENTINCK, when he was asked the secret of his success in breeding, replied, "Well, I breed a great many hounds and I hang a great many," which we might translate into different language by saying that the principle of hound-breeding is "many walks and one policy in kennel," or, if another form be preferred, "wide choice and narrow selection." But there is one point in the history of the Bentinck blood among foxhounds which must not be forgotten. The method by which the famous Burton pack was built up was an individual one, and was so far different from that of some other famous packs. Belvoir, Brocklesby and Milton are all the result of a kennel tradition carried on by able men until the type has become fixed and the possibilities of error reduced. But there are other packs which have done a great deal to raise the standard of foxhound-breeding which are almost entirely due to the judgment of an individual. Of these there are no more noteworthy instances (leaving living persons out of count) than the making of the Burton by Lord Henry Bentinck and of the Warwickshire by the late Lord Willoughby de Broke. In his delightful "Fox-hunting Recollections" Sir Reginald Graham asks where are the descendants of Lord Henry's celebrated pack? The answer is that they are dispersed in many kennels. But if we desired to form a pack like the one that filled the Burton kennels (and later the Blankney) during the Masterships of Lord Henry Bentinck and Mr. Henry Chaplin, it would probably be wiser to make the endeavour rather in the spirit than in the letter. Instead of searching, as we might do, for traces of the old Bentinck blood, it would probably be more profitable to examine closely the methods of Lord Henry Bentinck, and by following these to try if the causes would not produce similar results.

The breeding of the pack which Lord Henry Bentinck formed lends itself to this kind of analysis, for the success of the kennel was so unmistakably due to one man. Lord Henry changed his huntsmen frequently. He took counsel with

but two men, William Goodall of the Belvoir and Dick Burton, and even they were, perhaps, more his models for handling a pack in the field than for the selection of lines to breed from in the kennel. Let us see, then, what was the history of the Burton pack. Lord Henry started with a miscellaneous collection of drafts from good kennels. Not only did he breed a great many hounds, but he bought a large number. He soon came to perceive two things—first, that for Lincolnshire a light, active hound, with first-rate shoulders and deep ribs, was wanted; secondly, that no pack, however good, is of any use unless the hounds are properly fed in kennel and rightly handled in the field. Sir Richard Graham, writing of the Hunt as he knew it, says: "The art of handling them in the field was brought to perfection; noise, holloas, whip-cracking and over-riding were his abomination, and he knew well that his labour (of twenty years) was in vain unless they were carefully and judiciously handled in the field." So Lord Henry Bentinck watched his hounds closely in the field. He was inexorable if any hound fell short of a very high standard in his work; no beauty of form would save him from the rope. Thus the chief characteristics of the pack, according to the authority quoted above, who watched them in field, were "drive, speed, stoutness and extreme quality. The dog hounds were a little light in bone." We know that this last feature was not of such account in the Burton kennels as in most modern kennels.

There is some of the old blood in the Blankney kennel;

but, what is more important, if the views stated above are right, we are likely to see hounds of the old type in the kennel. The present Master has the advantage of hunting hounds himself. No one can know so well how to improve a pack as the man who handles them in the field. The Blankney country has not changed much since the days of Lord Henry Bentinck. Probably there are less plough and more fences than in those days; but still the country shows the same leading features of some heavy plough, a stretch of light sandy heath and strongly-fenced



W. A. Rouch.

DENTON.

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SPEAKER.

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VAGABOND.

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WHY NOT.

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pastures. It is said that Lord Henry loved to see his hounds fly their fences, and this is as desirable now as ever. It is a great hound country, for the pack can generally hunt on the plough, often fly over the heath—when they can run there at all—and generally beat horses over the stiffly-fenced vales. There are, too, some sturdy woodlands, such as the coverts of Wragby and Linwood (shared with the Southwold). In the present Blankney kennels we find the old traditions maintained, and note that working blood is being grafted carefully on to the older stock, and that sires which, like Belvoir Stormer, Vagabond and Villager, may, perhaps, be credited with more hard-working hounds than any other sires of the day, have been frequently used. Let us, then, take our photographic portraits, and begin with two home-bred hounds, Denton and Speaker. Both these are by Blankney Delegate, a son of Belvoir Dexter. This sire was still in the hound list for 1907, and, no doubt, has the stoutness and constitution which are characteristic of the Gambler line of the Weathergale family. He has transmitted the rich colouring, good bone and, if we may judge by expression and character, the intelligence of the family to his sons, and especially to Denton. Next we come to an older hound, Vagabond, who is, as perhaps those who are interested in hounds might guess from his looks, by Belvoir Vagabond, and Belvoir Vagabond is, next to Stormer, a great sire of workers. One of the points of the Vagabond family is their resolution, a sort of dogged determination to get their fox if he is above ground. Why Not, whose portrait speaks for itself, is by the Duke of Beaufort's Darter, and probably has some of the Bentinck blood which Mr. Austin Mackenzie so skilfully blended with Belvoir.

Passing from the individuals to the picture of the pack, we can see the stamp of hound which Lord Charles Bentinck has to work with. There is naturally a great look of Belvoir about them, as we should expect from the prevalence of Belvoir sires. But the relationship of Belvoir and Blankney is close, from the fact that much of the Blankney country is very similar to that of Belvoir on its Lincolnshire side. In the famous Wellingore Vale on the Blankney side of the boundary in Lincolnshire we know that when hounds run well at all they go very fast indeed. The Blankney horses and hounds, too, have the look of quality that the traditions of Lincolnshire demand of them. It is natural that polo players should become masters of hounds, and Lord Charles Bentinck's name recalls the era of the best of the inter-regimental tournaments. I think they were really better then than now, because in his day the 9th Lancers, the 10th Hussars and the 13th Hussars were so nearly equal that exciting contests were certain. But as the great players of those days gave up the game, they took to the even greater game of hunting. Polo is a magnificent game, but its joys pale compared to the pleasures of hunting a stout fox over a flying country with a pack of hounds you have bred yourself, as at the present day three of our leading polo players are doing. But polo is no bad school for a Master of Hounds, or, indeed, for any hunting man.

But to return to the Blankney. The Hunt has a great record of sport, and from the days of Mr. Henry

Chaplin to those of its present Master, it has been one of those Hunts in which all phases of hunting can be enjoyed, from the glorious burst, of which, perhaps, twenty minutes is enough for most horses, down to the hunting run, when, sometimes faster, sometimes slower, but always hunting, we pursue a stout old fox to the end. There is, we may say, the same difference between these two kinds of hunting, both desirable in their way, as between pleasure and happiness. X.

ON AUNTS.

THERE are many kinds of aunts. I do not mean the bustling sort, that never seem able to find a safe hiding-place for their swaddling-clothed babies, but the women aunts who take care of children whose parents are in India. Before I came to stay with Aunt Mary I was quite worried with thinking about which story-book aunt she would be like. There are the Aunt Marias, who are always cross and finding fault, however much the children try to please them; the Aunt Janes, who say sharp things about the way your mother has brought you up; and the strict, good Aunt Harriets, who never let their nieces forget that the earth is a vale of tears.



W. A. Rouch.

JOHN O' GAUNT.

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same, scratches do not matter a bit, if we get what we really want in the end, as the prince thought when the briars pulled off his helmet as he pushed his way through them to reach the Sleeping Beauty." My ayah told me about Sleeping Beauty years ago, but I begged Aunt Mary to tell me again. She does make stories interesting, and I was able to ask questions that had puzzled me: Whether, having slept one hundred years, Beauty was not rather old to marry? And if she was not frightened at being woke up by a strange prince's kiss? Aunt Mary answered that age stands still in sleep, and that Beauty was not frightened by the prince, because it was of him she had been dreaming all the time, and when their eyes met she knew that he was her true love. Then auntie looked as though she was dreaming; she began to scribble on a patch of sand with her parasol, crosses and moons and the words Mary Hammond. She rubbed them quickly out with her foot and said, "That is some nonsense my Irish Nanny used to teach me, Molly; nine crosses to ward off the evil eye and nine moons for good luck." Our two names are Mary Chandos. I was just going to ask if Mary Hammond was the name of the Irish Nanny, when Aunt Mary said, "I am half asleep. Would you not like to run down to the brook and try to dam the water while I rest?" Auntie and I have often tried to dam the water, but we



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LORD CHARLES BENTINCK ON SALAR.

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Now, Aunt Mary is not in the least like any of these aunts; she plays games with me, just as though she were a little girl, and, of course, she is quite old, for last week she had the most important birthday people ever have, except the first one, that does not count. We play Red Indians in the wood, crawling about under the trees. Words fail to tell all the different sounds we hear, sweet scents we smell and the wild creatures we see. When we tire, Aunt Mary sings to me. My favourite song is "My love has built me a bonny bower," but it makes me cry. Aunt Mary asked me once why. Then why did I listen dry-eyed to "Oh the poor babes in the wood" and "The birds of the air fell a sighin' and a-sobbin'?" It is difficult to explain, but they do not seem so real. When auntie sings the words "I sew'd his sheet, making my mane," her eyes grow dark with sorrow, and I feel as though a finger were pressing into my heart. Yesterday we went into the wood to get leaf-mould, but we blackberried instead; you never have to do the thing because you meant to with Aunt Mary. While I am picking I never mind the thorns, but afterwards the scratches smart. When I told Aunt Mary how they hurt she said, "If I were a proper aunt, Molly dear, I should tell you that no one can get anything worth having without pricks; but it is not true—picking primroses, for instance. All the



W. A. Rouch. LADY CHARLES BENTINCK'S POLLY MARSH. Copyright.

never can stop it for long; there is always a weak place where it pushes through at last. I was trying to lift a big stone when a man came along and helped me. He said, "Are you little Molly Chandos?" and when I answered "Yes," he told me that he knew my father, and had just been visiting my granny. He asked me where Aunt Mary was, and I said I thought she was asleep by the bramble bushes.

He said, "Then we will not disturb her just yet." He lay down on the grass and said, "Come and sit by me and talk; you are getting tired." I was not in the least tired, but I have often noticed that big men are lazy. I sat down by him and talked, for I like talking. I told him all about the Red Indians and the Sleeping Beauty, everything that I and aunt had said. At first I could not help thinking of the deaf adder stopping its ears, because he paid no attention and kept his eyes half shut, but when I got to the true love part, he sat up and smiled. Then, as I could not remember anything more to tell him, I asked him why (did he think) Aunt Mary had written Mary Hammond with her parasol? He did look surprised and pleased, but as though he could not believe me, and he said, "Your Aunt Mary wrote that! Are you sure?" When I said, "Quite sure," he answered, "Well! wonders will never cease." Then he got up, pulled some clods of earth and put a pile of stones by the brook and said, "Now, Molly, you stop up the water with these, and I will fetch your aunt to come and see." Before I had finished I heard Aunt Mary calling me. When I came near she was saying to the man, "I hate you." But the man said, "Is that true, Mary—Hammond?" Aunt Mary stamped her foot, she really did, and said, "I never want to see you again." Then she saw me and caught hold of my hand, saying, "Molly, you naughty girl, how

wet you are; we must go home at once." Her face was the face of my Aunt Mary, but her voice was the voice of an Aunt Maria. The man said, "Be reasonable, Mary. I am sorry that I startled you; but think of the temptation, and you know we love each other." Aunt Mary said, "Go away, you will frighten the child, she does not like strangers; come, Molly." Then the man left off speaking to Aunt Mary and said, "Come to me, Molly; we are not strangers, are we?" I pulled my hand away from auntie and went to him. He lifted me up in his arms and said, in a coaxing voice, "You love me, don't you, Molly?" and I said, "Yes." "Better than anyone else in the world?" and I said, "Yes" again. Afterwards I remembered my father and mother, but at the time I was thinking what a kind face the man had.

He gave a little laugh and kissed me. Then he said, "Now go to your Aunt Mary, little proxy," and he put me down. Aunt Mary drew back when I ran to her. It hurt me and I said, "Oh, why do you not like me any more?" Then she suddenly took me in her arms and let me hug her, but she must have been cold, because she was shaking all over. Afterwards she held my hand and said again, "Come, Molly," but this time the man held my other hand and walked right home with us. Aunt Mary did not tell him to go away; she said nothing at all, and he looked at her all the time, so that I had to do the talking. When Aunt Mary came to see me in bed, she told me that some day the man was going to marry her and then he would be my uncle. I said, "Well! wonders will never cease," exactly like the man had said it, but I added, "He must love me very much to want to be my uncle." Aunt Mary said, "Of course he does. Good-night, little egotist." Evidently proxy and egotist are fancy names for W. S.

SOME HABITS OF THE KESTREL.

THE county of Lancashire still can boast, in spite of its growing towns and unsightly factory chimneys, of being the home of several interesting species of birds which are considered rare in many parts of this country. The valleys of the Ribble and Hodder alone and the fells that look down upon them are in the nesting season inhabited by seventy to eighty different species of birds for breeding purposes; and anyone who exchanges desk and pen for field-glass and camera will thoroughly appreciate the delights of tramping the fells and valleys of that county, so well known for its commercial activity. Within a radius of five miles from my starting-point, a town with a population of 12,000, I can rely each season on finding nests of three species of hawks—sparrow-hawks, kestrels and merlins. The kestrels have occupied an old quarry. In a plantation of Scotch firs on slightly higher ground sparrow-hawks have nested year by year. Much higher still,

beyond the summit of the hill, among the heather or bracken, a pair of merlins are in the habit of nesting. Once the haunts of this bird are known, the nest is not difficult to find. Its presence may be detected by droppings upon a stone, sometimes by feathers littered around its base. The significant absence of small bird-life around such a spot will be another sign to the observer that merlins are in possession. These birds are true highlanders, and rarely seen in the valleys except when migrating. The sparrow-hawk, on the other hand, is quite a lowlander. As for the kestrel, he is equally at home on hill or plain. Probably this wider range in the selection of his hunting-grounds will account to a great extent for the fact that the kestrel is more numerous everywhere than either the sparrow-hawk or merlin. His reputation for comparative harmlessness towards game-birds and occasional usefulness in de-roying vermin no doubt contribute a little to secure him



A. Taylor.

YOUNG KESTRELS ALARMED.

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A. Taylor.

QUIESCENT.

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some immunity from the persecution to which hawks as a rule are exposed. Kestrels are not particular in their choice of a nesting-place. I have found a nest in a quarry, a barn, the deserted nests of magpies, rooks and carrion crows and among the rocks crowning a hilltop. The young birds in the illustrations were hatched and reared in the latter situation. In this nest the five eggs were of the ordinary brick red type. Varieties in colouring are to be found. Some have red blotches on a creamy white ground, and others dark brown markings on a white ground. Each female produces the same type of egg year after year, though eggs in the same clutch may vary slightly in markings.

In the nest of which I am writing all five eggs were hatched out, but one of the young birds did not live beyond three weeks. I visited this nest frequently, feeding and handling the nestlings, sometimes leaving food, which was eagerly seized upon by the parents to give to the young ones. A very noisy crew they soon became, always ready for a meal, and crying out for more even when their crops were bulging like the necks of pouter pigeons. Indeed, the shrillness of their cries and the conspicuous white splashes on the rock beneath the nest were enough to betray their presence when a considerable distance away. During incubation the old bird sat so close that it often required a shout, a clapping of hands or a stone striking the rocks near the nest to dislodge her. In the case of this family, male and female sat on their eggs in turn, the difference in sex between the two birds being clearly discernible by the larger size of the female. The absence of the parent birds was always noticeable from the noise made by their young, which continued steadily till the old birds silenced the shrill cries by some voiceless danger signal as they swooped past the nest on catching sight of the intruders. The food brought by the parent birds consisted for the most part of mice, though it must be confessed that remains of a lapwing, pipit and a ring-ousel lay near the nest. Some castings also contained remnants of beetles and moths. When the young birds were about a month old their appetites seemed to be diminishing, and their interest in their surroundings increased. About this time they began to venture off their nest on to a projecting ledge, where they could enjoy a sun-bath and plume their growing feathers. My frequent visits had now accustomed them to my presence, so that it was an easy matter to photograph them. They were all in fine plumage and condition, and appeared in no way anxious to break up their happy home or begin their first lessons in flying and capturing their prey for themselves. Their mild brown eyes had not yet gained that keen, watchful glance of the trained hunter of the air before which the timid small birds quail and shrink from sight among the foliage. I have often been struck by the rapidity with which the presence of a hawk is noticed and signalled through a wood

by the frightened birds. At one moment the wood is ringing with joyous songs of thrushes, blackbirds, chaffinches and warblers. Suddenly the singing ceases as if by magic and the songsters flutter precipitately into the nearest cover. A glance through the tree-tops reveals the mirauder floating above, poised steadily on almost motionless wings, if he be the kestrel, or sweeping past with rapid wing beats that bespeak the more dreaded sparrow-hawk. For not even thick foliage will always save the cowering victim from the swoop of this bold hunter. I have seen a blackbird flying for his life from a sparrow-hawk save himself by dashing down a rabbit-hole, to the complete mystification of his pursuer, who flew back and wheeled about the burrow in utter bewilderment.

For me the graceful manoeuvres of the kestrel on the hunt have always had a greater interest than the more direct methods of the sparrow-hawk. Hovering head to wind, hence the name "windover" given to the kestrel, on pinions motionless but for a faint flicker of the wing-tips, the kestrel hangs over a meadow and forms one of the most interesting sights of a country landscape. He is patiently watching for the least movement among the grass blades that may hide a mouse. Then comes the rapid downward swoop that rarely fails, the stroke with steel-like claws at its victim. A swift and silent tragedy, at the close of which the farmer will have one mouse enemy the less and the kestrel a dainty meal to whet his appetite. Two pairs of hawks rarely breed in one wood unless it be of considerable extent. By some tacit agreement, determined no doubt by the question of food supply, each district is divided by the raptors into well-defined "spheres of influence." In localities suitable for both merlins and kestrels the latter, being earlier breeders, are usually first in possession.

I know a hill crowned with boulders and thickly covered with heather over its lower slopes suitable for both merlin and kestrel. Here a pair of kestrels had their home for three successive seasons. The fourth year they came again, but one was trapped; a pair of merlins then came and nested in the heather. Next season merlins were there again; this year the kestrels. But, if hawks will not tolerate their own brethren on their chosen hunting-grounds, they seem content to live peacefully enough in close proximity to such birds as owls, magpies and carrion crows. In one small wood, over which no game-keeper rules with rod of iron, I have found nests of the kestrel, long-eared owl, carrion crow and magpie. In the very next tree to the one in which the kestrel was sitting, on its eggs, in a magpie's nest from which it had evicted the owners, was the long-eared owl's nest with young ones in.

Magpies, indeed, seem to be general nest-builders to other predatory tenants besides kestrels. Among these I may mention long-eared and tawny owls. When a kestrel nests in the rocks

it is content with far less comfort than in other situations. Here its eggs are usually deposited on the bare stone, though a little dirt may be scratched together before the eggs are laid. A hen kestrel whom I once flushed from a rock nest of this sort dropped an egg as she flew past me, which fell into a bed of rushes quite soft, beneath, where I picked it up unbroken. When once a nesting site has been selected, the kestrel exhibits great tenacity of purpose in rearing a family. I have even known them to continue laying in a wood whence several clutches of eggs have been removed. Unlike their ill-tempered neighbours, the sparrow-hawks, young kestrels make very docile and affectionate pets, often showing real attachment to their master. This difference in character between the two species is well brought out by their behaviour at mealtimes. Throw a morsel of meat among a family of baby sparrow-hawks, and you will see them fighting like wild cats. The manners of young kestrels in a like case are gentlemanly in comparison.

COUNTRY LIFE has always stood forward as a consistent and generous champion of our more interesting and harmless birds of prey, against the indiscriminate persecution to which they are exposed at the hands of thoughtless and selfish game-keepers and game-preservers. It has emphasised the cruelty and illegality of pole-traps. The distinguished sportsmen and naturalists among its contributors have again and again demonstrated the harmlessness and utility of the owl tribe, and even pleaded the cause of the rarer hawks, in spite of their acknowledged depredations. The kestrel has much to recommend him to their good influence for mercy at the hands of game-preservers. He cannot, it is true, claim the distinction of being a rare bird, and it must be admitted that he is occasionally guilty of avicide. Yet one of the strongest arguments in his favour may be urged in the fact that falconers have pronounced him, as a "bird-catcher," a complete failure.

ALFRED TAYLOR.

IN THE GARDEN.

THOROUGHNESS IN GARDENING.

WE have received several questions recently asking for information as to how to lay out a garden quickly; but beautiful gardens are not formed in a year. We were reading recently Mackail's "Life of William Morris," and the biographer (Vol. II., page 22), in speaking of an address given by Morris to the students of the science and art school connected with the Wedgworth Institute at Burslem, in reference to art writes thus: "The other passage is a piece of straightforward, practical advice to designers. In the artist and, therefore, in his art, a certain moral quality was before all things essential. The qualities fatal to art were not technical; they were vagueness, hypocrisy and cowardice. And of these three vagueness was to Morris as immoral and, therefore, as inartistic as either of the other vices. Be careful to eschew all vagueness. It is better to be caught out in going wrong when you have had a definite purpose than to shuffle and slur so that people can't blame you because they don't know what you are at. Hold fast to distinct form in art. Don't think too much of style, but set yourself to get out of you what you think beautiful, and express it as cautiously as you please; but, I repeat, quite distinctly and without vagueness. Always think your design out in your head before you begin to get it on paper. Don't begin by slobbering and messing about in the hope that something may come out of it. You must see it before you can draw it, whether the design be of your own invention or Nature's."

And, as we have written before, would that people would take this advice to heart in matters pertaining to the laying out of gardens. We should not then see those whole acres of planted ground where the evident procedure of the original planter could not be better described than as "messing about." How often do we see excellent shrubs, perhaps planted without any definite intention, any inspiration towards pictorial effect, incongruous units huddled together; a waggon-load of trees ordered without plan, and planted somehow—tall ones at the back, short ones in front and middle-sized between. Shrubs grandly grown by the nurserymen perfectly planted, technically all right, but because of that sin of vagueness, of not taking the trouble to intend the doing of anything in particular, the thing done is senseless and soulless and wholly unprofitable.

This is why we may see hundreds of gardens, one just like another in their wearisome monotony of utter dullness, where the only impressions that the more understanding observer receives are those of weariness at the tiresomeness of it, of regret

that good material and good labour should be spent upon so dull a thing, of a desire to get out of it, to escape from its irritating restraint and get away into the field or wood or wayside, each of them a better garden in the sense of a place of repose to mind and eye than the one where there is no definite or clear intention—nothing but "messing about."

It does not matter whether or no the garden shows the kind of treatment that most pleases or interests you or me; it may not do either. Your taste or mine may be gratified by beautiful effects of grouping or colouring; other people, who also love their gardens, may like it to grow things for their individual interest, or for many another reason, and with a wide diversity of object, and wherever this is the case, wherever a strong or even distinct wish of any one individual dominates the working of the garden, the garden will show that it is a living thing and not a thing inert. It will, in some sort, reflect the mind of its owner; it will look like something that is alive.



Mrs. D. Broughton. AN ORNAMENTAL GOURD. Copyright

HARDY HEATHS FLOWERING NOW.

SEVERAL of the Heaths, as the hardy *Ericas* are popularly called, have for several weeks past been providing most welcome patches of colour in borders, beds and on the margins of shrubberies. Perhaps the most beautiful of all these late winter and early spring flowering Heaths is *Erica carnea*, a native of Europe that seldom grows more than a few inches high. The small, bright rosy red flowers are so freely produced that a bed filled with plants of this Heath is a conspicuous, interesting and beautiful object for at least two months at this season. *Erica mediterranea hybrida* is similar in some respects to the foregoing. It often reaches a height of 15 in. or 18 in. and the flowers are a paler rose colour and slightly larger than those of *E. carnea*. It flowers rather earlier, which is a point in its favour that cannot be overlooked. Very similar to *E. mediterranea hybrida*

is *E. m. alba*, except that the flowers are white. Many entertain the erroneous idea that these hardy Heaths will only thrive where peat is present in the soil. It is quite true that they enjoy peat, but where the natural soil is well drained and contains a good proportion of sand these charming plants will grow and produce their flowers in abundance. They may be propagated by placing soil over the bases of some of the most vigorous branches, thus inducing roots to form, the rooted portions being removed in the autumn and planted where required. A better, though more troublesome, way is to procure young shoots in June, removing them with the smallest possible piece of the older wood. Trim off the lower leaves and insert them in pots of finely-sifted peat and silver sand. Before placing this soil in the pots fill them two-thirds full with small pieces of broken pots and on these place the soil, ramming it as tightly as possible and placing a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. layer of clean silver sand on the surface. Then plant the cuttings to about a third of their depth, an ideal length for a cutting being 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Water in with a fine roset can, and then plunge the pots to their rims in cocoanut fibre in a cool greenhouse, placing a bell-glass over each potful of cuttings. Those that root are allowed to remain in the

original pots until the following spring, when they are potted singly into 2in. pots, using peat and silver sand and making it firm. The following autumn they are ready for planting in the open. Cool treatment, with protection from heavy rains and severe frosts, must be given while the plants are in pots.

THE DOUBLE GORSE

The double-flowered form of the common Gorse, or *Furze*, is another plant that deserves more attention from plant-lovers than it receives, its bright golden double blossoms making a gallant display during the spring and early summer months. As a plant for poor, stony soil this cannot be beaten, and when once established it will live for many years with little or no attention. Plants should, however, be procured in pots, as it very much resents moving. It is easily propagated by means of cuttings, young shoots being taken off during the summer months when about 3in. long, the bottom spines removed and the cuttings then inserted firmly and close together in a firm bed of sandy soil in a cold frame. Water in and shade from bright sunshine, keeping the frame closed almost entirely until signs of growth are apparent; then ventilate gradually, until finally the glass lights may be entirely removed. The rooted cuttings are best left in the frame until the following May or June, when they must be lifted and potted separately into 2½ in. pots, returning these to the frame and keeping the latter closed and shaded until the plants are established, then giving plenty of ventilation. The plants will be ready for the open beds the following autumn, care being taken not to disturb the roots when turning them out of their pots. F. W. H.

ANNUAL CLIMBING PLANTS

The illustration of a Gourd running over rough stems suggests a way of growing annual climbing plants which is not adopted so freely as one might suppose, considering the quick growth and beauty of the kinds available for the purpose. Gourds are usually associated with some rough corner of the garden, where one expects to find the Vegetable Marrow, but it has a picture-que beauty that deserves better treatment. The accompanying letter will explain the object of the illustration. But besides the Gourd there are other climbers, which may be more correctly thus described. For quick effect the Japanese Hop is unexcelled; it makes tremendous growth, running over pergola or summer-house in one year, then after its usefulness is accomplished more permanent things may be planted. There is a variegated variety which is not pretty, but it has the same strength of growth. Then there are the well-known Canary Creeper or *Nasturtium* (*Tropæolum canariense*), the tall *Nasturtiums*, and the *Convolvulus*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE GOURD AS A CLIMBER.

SIR,—The Gourd, as seen in the illustration, provides a most effective covering for the rustic arch. The seeds should be sown in March in 65 deg. of heat, the seedlings potted in good rich soil, and at the end of May or beginning of June planted out in the places where they are to remain. Care should be taken for the first week or two to protect them from slugs, the soft, juicy leaves providing a tempting bait for these garden pests. The secret of success is to keep them in the best and richest soil, that they may grow quickly and luxuriantly. Preparation should be made for them by forming a bed of light rich loam with, where feasible, a foundation of fermenting material. Their handsome foliage and hanging fruit make a pleasing contrast to the ordinary arch of Rose or Clematis. Gourds are especially suitable for wild gardens, or pergolas in the kitchen garden. The photograph was taken in the late summer of last year in the garden of Wallingford Castle, Berks.—E. BROUGHTON.

BUDDLEIA VARIABILIS.

SIR,—I always read your notes in COUNTRY LIFE with interest. You speak of *Buddleia variabilis* doing well on a wall in unfavoured localities. Four years ago I made a pergola, and towards one end of it I constructed a bay, large enough to hold a big garden seat. Over this I trained *Buddleia variabilis* to keep out the strong western sun. I planted one at each end of the bay, and in a year there was a complete screen of foliage and a rich show of bloom. Now the stems of these plants are as thick as my wrist, and the growth is so rampant that I have difficulty in keeping it in bounds; indeed, it is so vigorous that I have planted *B. variabilis* var. *veitchiana* in the centre to take the places of the others. These will be removed when the new plant gets big enough to displace them. The var. *veitchiana* is a great improvement on the old form. On the same pergola I have two plants

of *Escallonia Ingrami*. In hard winters, such as this year and last, the foliage is somewhat cut back and browned; but in mild winters it comes through unscathed. Both the *Buddleia* and *Escallonia* yield a profusion of bloom. I have the latter in my shrub-ery in the highest and most exposed part of the garden, and even this severe winter has not touched it. *Choisya ternata* also flourishes splendidly with me. If the *Buddleia* and *Escallonia* can do on a pergola in Margate, there is hope for them in many unfavoured districts.—ARTHUR ROWE, Prince's Avenue, Margate.



Herbert G. Ponting.

THE CASTLE OF CHILLON.

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DRAYTON was Drayton Basset in days gone by, and thereto hangs most of the history of the park and of this site, where there has been a famous dwelling-place time out of mind. This was Turstin's Domesday manor of Drayton, and Turstin, by the old guesswork pedigrees, was forefather of all the Bassets. But Turstin is only a name in a book, and we soon find men wandering under the Drayton oaks of whom there is more to tell. That terrible Earl of Chester, Hugh the Fat from Avranches, had Drayton in his hands and sealed it away for a portion with Geva, his base-born daughter, a wolf-cub whom Geoffrey Ridel had as his bride. Geoffrey Ridel's was no long tenure. Very soon after the wax was set to Earl Hugh's charter, Geoffrey, "the justiciary of all England," sailed from Normandy with the King's son, and tidings came to Drayton that the lady of Drayton's husband had been drowned with the Lord William and a ship-load of lesser folk when the White Ship struck. But he left a daughter, and Drayton went with her when she married another justiciary of all England. This second judge to hold Drayton was Richard Basset. Ralph his father we know, a man of whom a chronicler in an ill temper writes that, being of ignoble stock, King Henry the Beauclerc "had drawn him, so to speak, out of the dust." Ralph himself was a justiciary, so here at Drayton we have the beginnings of a little group of kinsfolk among whom the judge's seat came nigh to being hereditary. Thus Richard Basset, judge and son of a judge, had a nephew or near kinsman in Thomas Basset, a judge and an Exchequer baron, grandfather of Philip, a famous justiciary. Richard Basset of Drayton begat William, a judge,

who begat Simon, another judge, perhaps father to William, whose name would complete five generations of these doom-givers. The house and name flourished, and grafts from the main stock were soon set all over the English garden. Richard of Drayton was Norman enough to build a keep on his overseas fief at Montreuil, but England soon took his children in hand and made Englishmen of them. Great lords of the realm, knights and sheriffs, squires and priests, you can see their shields to-day, the three sharp piles of the one line or the waves of the other, crumbling over many a doorway. Barons of Wycombe and Weldon, Drayton, Sapcote and Hedendon, lords of many score manors, they are no longer in the peerage books. But one line holds land of old inheritance, and that is in the far western corner of England. We must hear much of these Bassets if we would have the history of King John and his son and their long quarrel with the barons. In that quarrel Bassets a many are found on either side, brother riding against brother and cousin against cousin. Alan Basset of Wycombe stood by King John in the field of Runnymede. But Alan's son Gilbert and Philip his brother were both outlawed in the same year, although they came back to their allegiance in time for Philip to fight for his King at Lewes, where he was taken alive with more than twenty wounds on him. Our Drayton Bassets took the barons' side and stayed by it stubbornly, their Sapcote cousins with them. When all was lost at Evesham, Earl Simon bade the baron of Drayton ride for life and limb, and had a denial from a man who would stay to fight it out beside his leader. "Sir Rauf the gode Basset," says the poet, "did ther his ending." With that ending of this gentle knight there came, we may take



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THE FOUNTAIN COURT.

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GALLERY OF FAMOUS MEN.

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it, some measure of peace to distracted Staffordshire, where during the troubled day Sir Ralph and his lawless kinsfolk in arms against the Crown had been ill company for loyal neighbours. The very plea rolls of the age read like ballads of Robin Hood when they tell of the eleven squires who bring down the King's venison where they will in the King's forest of Cannock, no forester daring to lay hands on them, because they are sworn fellows of Ralph Basset of Drayton.

For all their misdeeds the Bassets were not parted from Drayton, and when the great struggle was over, the lords of Drayton came back to their allegiance and were the King's loyal men. The last of this line of warriors — Ralphs followed Ralphs — was Sir Ralph Basset, who was with the Black Prince at Poitiers, and many times went warring beyond sea. He married a great lady, the sister to John of Montfort, Duke of Brittany, but no children were bred of the match, and he lies, the last of his line, under a tomb at Lichfield, where is his effigy clad in his plates and his coat armour. Another memorial of him is in the Chapel of St. George at Windsor. He was Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, and the enamelled plate of his arms, his mantled helm and the grinning black boar's head of his crest, remains the only fourteenth century stall-plate in existence. His heirs were Staffords and Greys, issue of his great-aunts, and Drayton never saw another Basset. Edward Grey, the Viscount Lisle, died seized of Drayton in the early years of Henry VIII., but later in the reign George Robinson, a merchant, had, as it seems, a lease of the lands. The Robinsons bred a spendthrift who mortgaged his rights to one Paramore and would have ended a wearisome suit at law by sending his servants to re-enter Drayton by force. In the good Ralph Basset's days this would have been esteemed sound Staffordshire procedure, but in 1573 the law was more easily scandalised. The Lord Stafford and the Sheriff with the posse of the county came battering with guns at the old house door, dragged out the trespassers and flung three of them into gaol. Such rights



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"COUNTRY LIFE."

as Paramore had acquired passed to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, heir of the Lord Lisle, and Drayton became one of the many houses of the man "whom earth could never, living, love." It does not appear that the magnificent lord of Kenilworth spent many days upon his Staffordshire inheritance; but, at his death, its very remoteness made it a fitting home for his widow. Lettice Knollys, widow of an Earl of Essex, was a woman whose name had been linked with Leicester's before her first husband's death. About each of Leicester's three marriages there ran evil tales. Of Amy Robsart's death he was "infamed" by common speech all the days of his life. The two other countesses were, if we may credit such scandals, widows by grace of Leicester's poisoners. The second is said to have lost hair and nails through a venomous draught, and when the Earl himself died suddenly in his wife's company, men said that she and his gentleman of the horse had dosed his drink with a cordial of his own brewing. However that might be, so soon as the Earl was laid to rest with a funeral as costly as any of his pageants the widowed Countess made haste to wed Christopher Blount, that same gentleman of the horse. Court favour was out of reach of this loving couple. Although Leicester had made his secret marriage with Lettice Knollys when all hope of a Royal match was lost to him, Elizabeth could never abide that lady, her kinswoman by the Boleyn side, so the Countess was content to retire into Staffordshire, there to queen it among hard-riding knights and deer-stalking squires, having the long lawsuit with the Earl's son by the Lady Sheffield for more intellectual diversion. It was half a century before she followed Leicester to his magnificent tomb in his chapel at Warwick, and long ere that day, time and men's forgetfulness had created her "the good old Countess," whose noble housekeeping at Drayton, "garnished with such harmless recreation" as masques and plays, was gratefully remembered in many a house about Tamworth. When her son Essex died by three blows of the axe she had a grandson to breed up. This young Essex had a historian for his gentleman in waiting, one Arthur Wilson, a man who could make those stage plays that the good old Countess loved.



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By Wilson's own account, the Drayton household must have spent most of its hours in the saddle. The lands had carried a heavy head of game since the Ralph Basset of King John's day imparked Drayton out of the limits of Sutton Forest by agreement with an Earl of Warwick to whom two fair does were to be sent year by year. Arthur Wilson has strange tales of sporting adventures come by in galloping under the Drayton trees, with a master who would "ride very hard eighty or a hundred miles in a day," an earl who would take his morning draught at Drayton and his noon dinner in his house at Warwick. A restless man, envious of the happiness that never came his way, flung aside by one wife and deceived by another, slighted in his loyal days and suspect in rebellion, the Earl did not long survive the old grandmother in Staffordshire. His sisters were his heirs. A line of descent and a clause in a will brought Drayton at last to the first Marquess of Bath, who, about 1790, cut the thread that linked the eighteenth century owners of house and park with ancient Bassets and Ridels. The purchasers are said to have bought at a bargain price. Mr. Robert Peel was one of them—his share of this Thynne estate lay on the Tamworth side. Six years later he bought out the other purchaser's share and came to make his home in the old house and park. Even as Mr. Peel bought it, the ancient manor house must have been a dwelling to fire the fancy of an antiquary. Lord Bath had sold it as a wide-spreading warren of buildings, whose low gables showed above a massive wall pierced by a gatehouse. The bulk of it timber-framed buildings about a wide court, into which led several little staircases, for all the world as in a college quad. The rooms were mostly small and low, but the hall spacious and hung about with bucks' heads and pictures. There was a banqueting-house towering apart in the gardens. A Mr. Fisher, who dwelt in the house after Lord Bath's steward had removed himself, pulled down the garden-house, most of the quad coming by the like fate before Mr. Fisher had neatly repaired the corner of the manor house in which he meant to dwell. Then came Mr. Peel, who was no sooner master at Drayton than he pulled



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TERRACE STEPS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

down all that Mr. Fisher had spared. "Marmion" and the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" were yet to be written, and no one, save a browsing antiquary or so, mourned for old Drayton Hall.

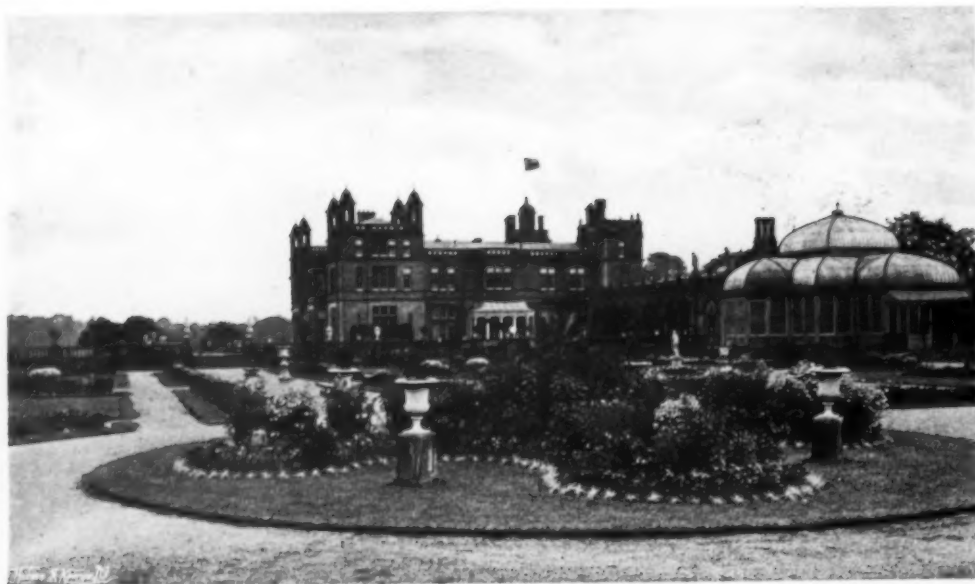
Mr. Robert Peel, weaver and calico-printer, millionaire and politician, stood for the new men from whom a new aristocracy were to spring. But from the older families that were passing away he took over the tradition that manor must be added to manor before a race can be stably founded. Therefore, he set himself in the place of Bassets and Ferrerses, and plucked down the old hall, to rebuild it in the most sumptuous fashion of his day as the parent house of the great families to spring from his six well-portioned sons. New Drayton Manor House was many years a-building, and before the old baronet had ended his long life his great son, the Secretary of State, had taken the direction of the work. One fancy of the statesman was the gallery of pictures, planned after Clarendon's example, and furnished forth with busts and portraits of artists, poets, authors and statesmen. "I am building a new house," wrote Mr. Peel in 1824 to Sir Walter Scott (Sir Walter who would have wept for the old one), "and in it a gallery



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MARBLE VASES: SOUTH WALK.

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THE TOWERS OF DRAYTON.

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UNDER THE PERGOLA.

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A VIEW FROM THE SOUTH.

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for pictures. I want above all things a portrait of you, but no pencil but Lawrence's will satisfy me. He is to paint for me his own portrait, Davy's and the Duke of Wellington's, and he has painted for me Lord Eldon's and Lord Stowell's. So much for the fine arts, science, war and law. For every branch of literature there is a 'knight of the shire' who represents them all." Five years later old General Dyott, near neighbour of the Peels, a stolid soldier-squire whose row of diaries gives a Pepysian flavour to the age of George III. and his sons, notes down the scene at a Drayton dinner. A wonderful man, this old baronet, says the admiring General, "one looks at him with veneration and respect," for, as the General is careful to explain, Sir Robert has acquired an immense fortune and bred a Secretary of State. When the Secretary came at last into his inheritance, the General, paying a call, found Sir Robert the Second waiting for his architect, who was that day to give him a plan of yet more additions to the great house. Through these neighbourly eyes we may watch the progress of the work. In 1832 Sir Robert could show the General the magnificent new house and stables, and the flower gardens laid out by Gilpin, the water-colour painter and landscape gardener. By 1836 all is "splendidly finished," although General Dyott finds that the library does not light up cheerfully owing to "the dark melancholy book-cases," and Sir Robert had a house in which he could feast seven-score of anti-reform Staffordshire squires. Our old General, in one of the last entries of a sixty-four year diary, records with a trembling pen a dinner at Drayton: "The party consisted mostly of neighbours. I was not quite equal to the visit, but there is no saying nay to the Premier." The year before, Drayton had entertained more exalted guests. "You will have heard," writes the young Queen to her uncle, "an account of our stay at Drayton (which is a very nice house) and of Albert's splendid reception at Birmingham." Into that dangerous town, where the very Mayor, as Sir Robert must needs give warning, was a Chartist hosiery of extreme opinions, the Prince had gone gallantly, speaking, as the Queen proudly records, "to all those manufacturers in their own language, which they did not expect, and these poor people have only been accustomed to hear demagogues and Chartists."

This house of Drayton, which the Queen found "nice" and General Dyott "magnificent," is still much as it stood when Sir Robert was carried to the vault in the ugly church which followed an older one whose roof blew away and windows blew in about the time that the old house walls fell. Smirke was the chief Drayton architect, a man who would feel no qualms at removing anything that remained to tell of Bassetts and Devereuxes. This was the Smirke who replaced the old hall of the Inner Temple with commonplaces of Victorian Gothic more to the taste of the benchers—Smirke of

the British Museum and the Post Office. His Drayton work has been called, indifferently, either Italian or Elizabethan. It might be more accurately described in the language of the house-agent's as "an imposing country seat, suitable for a nobleman or family of consideration." So much at least could Smirke assure his patrons, and Drayton is a house of ample spaces and lofty rooms, although the eye does not linger pleasantly over Smirkian details. Sir Robert's gallery of famous men is here, the canvases and the marble, his books are ranged on the library shelves, and the gardens admired by General Dyott are as Gilpin plotted them, the stately south walk with the long line of vases and urns, the fountain court with its pool. And although the main

existence, in which he marked no less than 439 plants as occurring in the parish of Selborne. Moreover, in one of his letters to Dames Barrington he gives a "short list of the more rare plants discovered within our limits," and in this list several of the most striking species blossom in the early months of the year. Among these may specially be mentioned the two hellebores and *Daphne Mezereum*. The letter was written in 1778, just 130 years ago, and it would be an occasion of much interest to discover how the changes of time have dealt with these rarities of the Selborne flora. For the village itself has greatly changed. If Gilbert White could revisit his ancient haunts he would scarcely recognise "the one single straggling street, three-



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line of the Peels has seen more vicissitudes than their solidly-built house, Sir Robert Peel the Fourth is still lord of Drayton Manor.

O. B.

SELBORNE IN EARLY SPRING.

IN the days of Gilbert White the village of Selborne was difficult to approach during the winter months. The "hollow rocky lanes" which led to Alton and to Wolmer Forest respectively were "more like water-courses than roads," and were bedded with naked rag for furlongs together. In places they ran 16ft. or 18ft. below the level of the fields, and were so narrow that waggons could not pass except at certain places. The rough road, or cartway, to East Tisted was little better, and was almost impassable in bad weather. As an illustration of the conditions of travelling we find in White's "Garden Kalendar" the significant entry under March 15th, 1756: "Brought a four-wheel'd postchaise to ye door at this early time of the year." In this respect Selborne is much changed for the better. Good roads now run from the Pleistor in several directions, and there is no difficulty in reaching the historic village. A visit to Selborne in the early days of spring has for the botanist a peculiar interest. For though the study of plants did not attract Gilbert White to the same extent as ornithology, yet in all branches of natural history he took a keen interest. His copy of Hudson's "*Flora Anglica*," the standard flora of the eighteenth century, is fortunately still in

quarters of a mile in length, running parallel with the Hanger," so many new houses have been built. His old home, too, has been considerably altered and enlarged. Still, his study and bedroom remain unchanged, and out in the garden may be seen several objects associated with the great naturalist. His brick pathway across the lawn is carefully preserved. The "Ha-ha wall built of blue rags" still divides the path from the garden, while on the lawn stands his sundial, the column of which, he tells us, "came from Sarson House, near Amport, and was hewn from the quarries of Chilmarke." And the natural features of the parish remain as in the eighteenth century. The glorious Hanger is still covered with beeches, "the most beautiful," as White thought them, "of forest trees." The pathway down the Lyth, much beloved of our naturalist, is as quiet and sequestered as when he wandered there. The "hollow lanes," to which we have alluded, still abound with Filices and other "curious" plants. The noble yew tree, which White thought to be coeval with the church, the trunk of which measures over 25ft. in circumference, still guards the churchyard, and in early spring "sheds clouds of dust, and fills the atmosphere around with its farina." In White's time the *Daphne Mezereum* grew on "Selborne Hanger among the shrubs at the south-east end above the cottages." There is also a record of its being found there as late as the year 1850. Now I fear it must be reckoned among the extinct plants of Selborne. Many a season, in the month of February, or early in March, have I searched the brushwood above the Hanger in vain. Once again I ascended the Hanger by the famous zigzag path, made by Gilbert White and his brother John in the year 1752, and explored the wild grounds on the top and the common

towards Newton and the deep slopes facing north, but not a plant could I find. It is much to be regretted that this handsome shrub has disappeared. Its great rarity, its distinguished appearance, its early flowering, the sweet fragrance of its pale pink flowers render it one of the most attractive species in the British flora. But, as in the case of so many beautiful wild flowers, its attractiveness has proved its doom. Whenever a plant is discovered in its native haunts it is almost certain to be transferred to some neighbouring garden. One hundred years ago it seems to have been not uncommon in the woods about Andover and in other parts of Hampshire; now the plant is seldom met with. It is no doubt difficult to find, except when in flower in the woods in January or February, and the rabbits play havoc with the young plants; but man has probably been its greatest enemy. The process known as "copping," that is, the cutting of the undergrowth in woods, is carried out in winter and early spring, when the plant is most conspicuous; the woodman who is fortunate enough to come across the "Mezell" takes it up and carries it home for his own garden or for sale. Thus *Daphne Mezereum* has become extinct not only in Selborne Hanger, but in most parts of Hampshire, though it still remains common enough in cottage gardens. But though the *Mezereum* is gone, it is well to know that *Helleborus foetidus*, the stinking hellebore, bear's-foot, or setter-wort, is still blooming on Selborne Hanger, not, indeed, in such abundance as in White's time, when it grew "all over the High Wood and Coney Croft Hanger," but still in considerable plenty. I counted, to my delight—for I have never found the species elsewhere—some fifteen to twenty plants, many of them in flower. It is, indeed, a striking and handsome plant, and, moreover, one of peculiar interest because of its importance in mediæval herbalism. In shrubberies one sometimes meets with it, where, blossoming as it does in January and February, it is, as White says, "very ornamental"; but in a wild state it is an extremely scarce plant. In early times it was eagerly sought after by herbalists and horse-doctors. "The good women," White tells us, "give the leaves powdered to children troubled with internal complaints, but," he adds, "it is a violent remedy and ought to be administered with caution." Old Gerard has much to say with regard to "his virtues in curing oxen and such like cattell." Farriers or horse-leeches were wont, we learn, to cut a slit or hole in the dewlap, "as they terme it (which is an emptie skinne under the throat of a beast), wherein they put a piece of the root of setter-wort, suffering it there to remaine for certaine daies together," and "this manner of curing they do call Settering of their cattell." Most of the herbalists tell the same story, and old Culpeper adds that "out of question it is a speciall thing to rowell cattell withall." It is interesting to know that this fine plant maintains its position in Selborne Hanger, for it is, with one exception, the most interesting species to be found in that classic locality.

Leaving the Hanger at the end nearest to "Gracious Street," and crossing a hop-garden and some ploughed fields, "the deep, stony lane" is soon reached, where, in Gilbert White's time, "on the left hand just before turning to Norton Farm," the green hellebore grew. This uncommon plant, unlike its near relation the setter-wort, dies down to the ground early in autumn and springs up again about February, flowering almost as soon as it appears above ground. The flowers, as old Gerard says, are of "a greenish herby colour," and the leaves are much "jagged or toothed about the edges like a saw." The plant is a stately one and distinctly rare, but when once established will maintain its position for many years. It was, therefore, with no feelings of surprise that, on the very spot mentioned by Gilbert White in 1778, I saw the species, in comparative plenty, just coming into flower. All over the bank of the deep, stony lane it grew, and made a fine show with its large, pale green flowers. Closely allied to the hellebore is the winter aconite of our gardens, sometimes found in a semi-wild state, and it is interesting to notice that this pretty little plant, with its yellow flowers and glossy leaves, has established itself in some abundance along the side of a lane leading to the neighbouring church of Farrington, which Gilbert White served as a curate for many years. Down the secluded valley of the Lyth, which runs from below the church to the Priory Farm, the site of the old monastery dissolved by Bishop Wainfleet in the year 1486, will be noticed on every side "sweet omens of returning spring." The glossy leaves of the wild arum are shooting up from among the dead leaves; dark patches of the dog's mercury, already in flower, will be seen under the beech trees, and in sheltered spots a few primroses may be found. On the steep slope of a wood, close to "Conduit" field, which marks the ancient source of the monastic water supply, a large number of wild snowdrops have established themselves. Very beautiful they looked in the February sunlight, and the sight of them added not a little to the charm of my visit to Selborne in the early spring.

BOTANIST.

A GLOUCESTERSHIRE VILLAGE.

THE church, cross and manor house of Iron Acton in Gloucestershire are all intimately connected with the family of Poyntz, a branch of which flourished here for eleven generations. Pons, or Pontius, a cadet of the House of Eu, which was of the blood of Rollo, Duke of Normandy, was with his cousin William at the Conquest of England, and obtained grants of English land. Among his descendants was one who held Tockington—a manor close to Iron Acton—under the great Lordship of Gloucester, whose



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ENTRANCE ARCHWAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

castle of Thornbury is also at hand. But these Tockington Poyntzes, after the manner of their age and kind, were fully awake to the advantage of marrying heiresses, and so we find that Hugh Poyntz wedded Heleusis, daughter of William Malet, baron of Cory Malet in Somersetshire, and had a son, Sir Nicholas, described as of Cory Malet and Tockington. His grandson, marrying, first, a Zouche of Harringworth, left the Cory Malet barony to his son by her; but marrying secondly Matilda, cousin and heiress of Sir John Acton, he obtained for his younger son John the estates which the Iron Acton family had owned since soon after the Conquest. In due course this John Poyntz was knighted, served as Sheriff of Gloucestershire and died in 1376. His descendants, likewise serving their country in the shrievalty or in Parliament, followed in regular succession, and have left their mark at Iron Acton.



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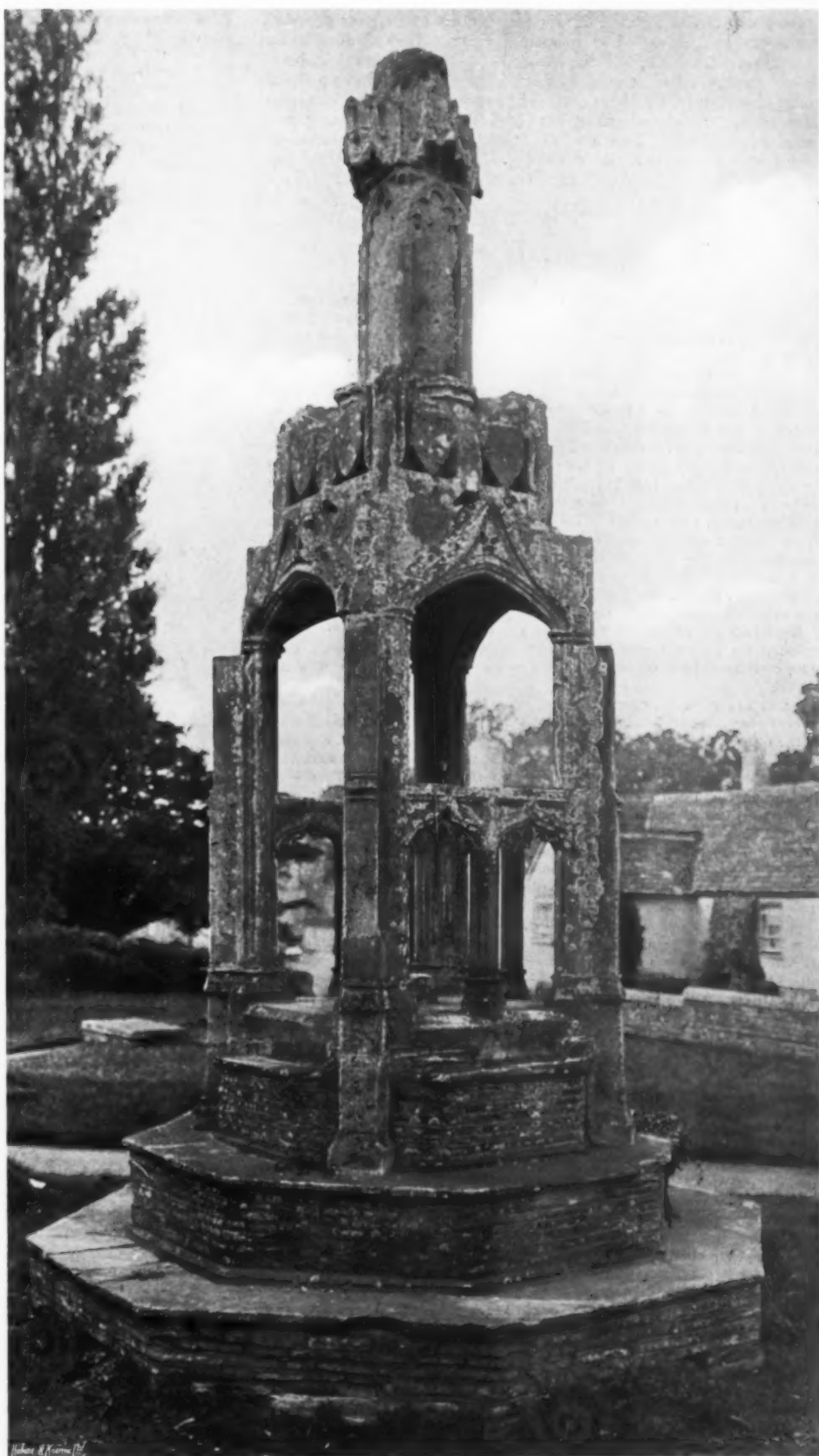
INTERIOR OF IRON ACTON CHURCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

On the quite remarkable, though mutilated, preaching cross here illustrated are found the arms of Acton and of FitzNicholas. This at once connects it with Robert, grandson of Matilda Acton, and second of the Poyntzes to hold her property. His second wife was a FitzNicholas, and we may, therefore, safely conclude that he took a leading part in the erection of the cross during the period between his second marriage and his death—that is, between 1420 and 1439. It stands in the churchyard facing the village street, and it is built as a pulpit, entered from the church side through the open section, so that the preacher could command a great audience gathered in the churchyard and in the roadway below. It rests on a three-tiered octagonal base built of the red sandstone of the district, as are the walls of the church close by, but is, itself, of the same fine ashlar material as the coigns, mullions and other dressed work of the church. The upper part originally bore

angels with priestly dresses, whose hands still show on the shields they hold; and on every alternate shield, all round, were represented the instruments of Christ's passion, as they often appear on fonts in the Eastern Counties. Three stone slabs in the church show that Robert and his wives were buried here, as were, no doubt, his successors, though the fine canopied tomb of Henry VII. date in the south chancel aisle has now no inscription, nor any coats upon its three shields. There lay here, probably, the predecessor of a Sir Robert, whose tomb may yet be seen in the Mayor's Chapel in Bristol. He had married a natural daughter of Anthony Wydvile, and threw himself into the whirlpool of fifteenth century politics, both local and national. He frequently served as sheriff, was knighted after the battle of Bosworth, and the next year gave dinner to Henry VII. at Iron Acton, where, either before or after this event, he must have rebuilt or improved the manor house, as the one remaining Gothic window appearing in our illustrations is of about this time, and it would then assume the appearance it possessed when, in Henry VIII.'s reign, Leland visited it, and tells us it "Standithe about a Quarter of a Myle from the Village and Paroche Church in a playne grounde on a redde Sandy Soyle. There is a goodly Howse and 2 Parks by the Howse, one of Redd Dere an other of Fallow." Sir Robert and his family were now much employed at Court. While he himself was Chancellor to Catherine of Aragon, his aunt Elizabeth was nurse to the short-lived boy which that Queen bore in 1510. Sir Robert, as well as his son Sir Anthony, was at the Field of the Cloth of Gold in the summer of 1520, and thence he came home to die in the November of the same year. He had already begun, but not completed, preparations for his sepulture at Bristol. He declares in his will that the chantry which he had caused to be new edified in the Mayor's Chapel—then known as "The Gaunts"—was not in all things perfected, and he directs his executors to finish and garnish it. This may account for its flooring of Spanish tiles, for his second son, Francis, at first a carver

in the Royal household, was sent as Ambassador to Charles V. in Madrid in 1527. He had profited a few years before, by the attainder of his brother's overlord, the Duke of Buckingham, who had been dragged from Thornbury Castle to the scaffold on a manufactured charge of treason in 1521. Anthony, the elder Poyntz, was of the Bristol jury before whom the Duke was indicted, for purposes of local attainder, and Francis, the younger, obtained a portion of the forfeited lands. Both would remember the time when they had accompanied their father to the great Christmas feast of 1507, at Thornbury, where so many of the country-side were entertained by the Duke. Sir Anthony did not merely attend his King as a courtier, for we hear of him in 1533 as a vice-admiral in command of twelve-sail. It was, however, his son Sir Nicholas who, in his own time, was the best known of the Iron Acton Poyntzes, for while carrying out, as was the custom of the family, his duties to his own country-side as Sheriff and Knight of the Shire, he played a prominent part at Court during the later years of Henry VIII., and his portrait by Holbein survives in the collection of the Marquess of Bristol. Nor was his successor, another Sir Nicholas, less in Royal favour, for he entertained the Virgin Queen at Iron Acton in 1575, and it was, no doubt, in preparation of this event that the manor house lost most of its Gothic features, and was transformed in style, size and arrangement into an Elizabethan mansion, such as, even in its decay and wreckage, we still recognise it to be. Then, too, would the simple but well-proportioned gate arch arise, comparable with that at Cold Ashton and other Gloucestershire homes. It bears remains of arms in its spandrels, and would, no doubt, yield further information as to its date and builder had the three panels of its entablature retained their original filling. This Sir Nicholas passed away in 1587 at the age of fifty-one, and made special mention in his will of "one Danske Cofer" standing in the parlour at Iron Acton. Under Elizabeth we should have expected furniture from the Low Countries, and not from Denmark until that country gave a wife to her successor, so that the unusual origin of the chest will account for its particular testamentary mention. During the time of the Civil War we find at Iron Acton a Sir Robert Poyntz, a keen Cavalier, who wrote a "Vindication of Monarchy," and was followed in 1665 by Sir John, who was buried in Iron Acton Church "in woollen only according to the directions of an Act of Parliament made and provided in that case," says the parish register, in allusion to the law of Charles II.'s time favouring the home clothiers. Sir John's death terminated the long connection of this village and church with the Poyntz family. If we look at the many features in the interior of the interesting church we see nothing which dates from when Poyntzes were not except the noble brass chandelier which bears the inscription "Giles Lovinge, Wm Payne Churchdⁿs 1725." The finely-canopied stone niches at the east end and the Gothic linen-panel oak benches (now of a delicious grey colour) which fill the whole of the nave of the church belong to the period when Henry VII. paid his visit, and when the little stairway, whose two doors we see on the left of the picture, led to a rood-screen stretching across the nave, which on this north side has no aisle. Some time after the first rage of Protestantism had bared the church of its finest interior feature came the Laudian revival, introducing the oak altar rails, which the wise and intelligent recent restoration has retained. Of this



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THE PREACHING CROSS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

time also is the pulpit, complete with its sounding board. Unfortunately, our illustration does not reveal the quaintly-spaced inscription which occupies the centre of the arcaded panel of the back, and shows us that the pulpit dates from the time of

ROBERT - HO
OPPER - PAR
SON - THOMAS
LEG AND
MIGHELL - TO
CK - CHURCH
WARDENS
ANNO 1624

The church restoration took place in 1879, during the short incumbency of the late Henry Thompson, when he ceased to be

censor of Christchurch, Oxford, and before he was headmaster of Radley School. It is seldom we can give unstinted praise to the work of a restoring vicar. Iron Acton is an exception. Looking, both inside and outside, at what has been done, and still more at what has not been done, we find no sin of commission and abundance of the virtue of omission. All has been preserved, and only where it was absolutely necessary has there been renovation. The church, therefore, is an epitome of architectural changes, of church and parish history, and the result has been to retain, rather than obliterate, the past. T.

"CRAG-FAST."

A COLD, biting wind blows down the valley. Day has not yet broken, and the snow-clad fells are hidden behind heavy masses of cloud that pour unceasingly from the pass at the top end of the dale. Overhead, a single star keeps company with a wan half-moon whose feeble rays enhance the dreariness of the bleak, wintry scene. At the Fell Gate stands Tommy, the huntsman, impatiently awaiting us. In spite of the rawness of the morning he wears no overcoat. His cheery red face shines out from its framework of bristles, and a thick woollen scarf is the only additional protection he carries. Ranter is with him and gives a doggy welcome. "Noo, we mun gang on and catch up wi' t' keeper and Jack Tyson," remarks Tommy, and we set off by the lakeside, our boots sounding clear on the hard, frozen ground. Head to wind we tramp, with rugged fell on the one hand and the deep, black, rippling water on the other; across the lake a mass of shale and rock rises into the mist and is lost. As we turn a bend in the road there comes the sound of many men marching. Tommy chuckles at our astonishment, for the many men turn out to be but our three selves and a pronounced echo which throws back with startling distinctness the "tramp tramp" of our hobnails from the rocks across the water. Soon we catch up with the gamekeeper and Tyson, Tommy's assistant. They both carry long coils of rope, and subsequent events prove that they are needed.

Our object is to rescue two of the hounds which have evidently become what is locally known as "crag-fast." Yesterday we put up a fine fox on the top of the fells. Reynard gave us a good run for half-an-hour, and then washed himself in a tarn. For ten minutes the hounds cast about, and finally Hector—a grand old dog—picked up the scent anew. Then—but the story of that run must be kept for another time. When dusk set in it was found that a couple of the hounds were missing. They were two of the best in the pack, and Tommy grumbled the whole way home. So it was arranged to look for them this morning, for it is terrible to think of the splendid animals crouching on a narrow ledge of cliff, unable to go forwards or backwards, and slowly starving to death. As we plod along the mists gradually grow thinner and thinner, and finally break up till they hang in wisps about the mountain-sides. Then, suddenly, a ray of light shoots up from behind the range across the lake. Another follows, then another, till the whole heaven glows. The vapours about the fell-tops are transformed into golden crowns, the sky takes on a brighter blue, and at last the rim of the sun peeps up above the clear-cut ridge and is reflected in the ripples at our feet. Day has come. The mists melt away imperceptibly, and soon the whole valley is full of light. The snow-clad peaks glitter and scintillate, and are bathed in a rosy atmosphere of peculiar beauty. Up on the fell a sheep bleats. At the head of the vale a few houses nestle under the frowning mountains, and we call at each of them to enquire if the hounds have been heard of or seen. No information is forthcoming, but we gain a valuable assistant in one of the guides attached to the hotel where the climbers put up.

"We mun gang up t' pass till t' peat hoose" (house), remarks Tommy. The pass out of the dale is not easy to negotiate even in summer. In winter it is distinctly difficult. Up we toil, bending our heads to the wind that whistles down the boulder-strewn track, blowing frozen particles of snow and ice with stinging force into our faces. The peat house lies off to the right in a saucer-shaped hollow. The day is clear, and we find it without much difficulty. It is only a low, little hut built of rough boulders and thatched with peats, but it is doubly welcome this wintry morning, for on approaching we find it occupied and a bright fire burning on the slab of granite that does duty for a hearth. One of the shepherds has spent the night there with some sheep that he is bringing home from the neighbouring valley. But, best of all, he has seen the hounds. They are crag-fast, as Tommy feared, but when the shepherd saw them at daybreak they were both alive and strong enough to bark. They were then on a ledge halfway down a narrow, yet exceedingly deep, ravine not half a mile away. Over the frozen heather we tramp, warmed by the sweet-smelling peat fire and cheered by the thought that the hounds are not dashed to pieces, and soon we arrive at the spot. The poor brutes hear us coming before we see them, for we hear a feeble bark and a whine, and when at last Tommy arrives at the edge of the gully brave old Harkaway struggles to his feet. But Tommy bids him "Lig doon," for the ledge is none too wide for the staggering hound. Belle can only thump her tail on the rock and whine. To cross the ravine we have to make a wide detour, but young Tyson remains to give the hounds confidence and keep them still. It is absolutely impossible to descend to the ledge direct, so the guide volunteers to go down on the rope. One rope is therefore made fast to a huge boulder lying some distance from the gully, and its loose end thrown over the edge. The guide himself knots it, and we test the knots by "hanging on" to the rope. It stands. The other rope is hitched round the guide's loins, and the keeper, Tommy and the rest of us all take hold. Walking calmly backwards, the guide disappears over the edge, while we slowly pay out rope. The other one affixed to the boulder tightens as the man's weight pulls on it. Suddenly Tyson yells to us to hold fast, and

at the same moment our rope is violently jerked. The guide's feet have slipped on the frozen rock, and he now swings by the solitary cord some 800ft. above the trickling stream at the bottom of the ravine.

"All right. Lower slowly," he shouts. We obey.

"Hold."

We settle ourselves firmly, and soon the rope begins moving backwards and forwards, pendulum fashion. The man, swinging in this way, is attempting to gain a foothold on the ledge where the dogs crouch. By a lucky chance he grasps the guide rope which he had lost, and soon pulls himself on to the ledge. For a minute or two he rests, and then places Belle in a sack, ties the sack to the guide rope, and we haul her up. The same method is used for Harkaway, and then commences the struggle to get the brave fellow back. He pulls at the guide rope, kicking footholes in the frozen earth, seeking every crevice in the rocks for his toes, and we strain at the main rope. Slowly he mounts, the loosened rocks crashing down at every step, till at length we give a final heave and he is lying on the heather beside us, panting. The hounds crawl round us as we regain our breath, and they lick us gratefully. Tommy feeds them with some mixture of his own concocting, after which we go back to the peat house to rest and eat before making the descent. It is wonderful to see how rapidly the hounds recover under the influence of the warmth and—so Tommy avers—the mysterious mixture. But the careful old huntsman will not let them do the walk back to the kennels. We carry them down the pass to the hamlet, and there place them with one of the farmers and see them made comfortable in the kitchen. And as we tramp joyously back through the clear, frosty air the hills re-echo, for Tommy has a powerful voice and knows some swinging hunting songs. W. R. CALVERT.

A MENACE TO THE BEECH TREE.

A FEW days ago a deputation, appointed, we believe, by the Royal Horticultural Society, examined the trees in Burnham Beeches to ascertain the extent of the ravages of the felted beech coccus (*Cryptococcus fagi*). This pest was the subject of a leaflet issued some time ago by the Board of Agriculture, in which it is mentioned that this insect confines its attacks exclusively to the beech, and is one of the most destructive pests against which the arboriculturist has to contend. It is widely distributed throughout England, has occurred in many parts of Scotland, is common in the counties of Flint and Denbigh in North Wales, but has so far been recorded in only one locality in Ireland. Its attacks are often restricted to a comparatively small area, or even isolated trees, this being especially noticeable when the trunks are sheltered from the prevailing winds.

This insect is unfortunately more common now than it was a few years ago. At one time it was comparatively local, but unhappily is now prevalent generally, as the Board of



BLIGHT ON TRUNK.

Agriculture points out. It has been regarded as harmless, but recently—we wish this discovery had been made before—it is numbered among the most dangerous of pests. It is a serious menace to the parks of this country, and unfortunately the owners seem to be quite ignorant of the real condition of the trees. The beech coccus is injurious to the trees in two ways: (1) by drawing off the sap; (2) by smothering the bark with a white felt-like substance, under the protection of which it lives and breeds. The presence of this insect, unlike that of many others, can be recognised at once by the white patches of the cotton-like exudations which proceed from its body. When the insect has been allowed to remain unmolested for some time the stems of the trees look as if they had been whitewashed, and those so affected rapidly become unhealthy. The pest should be dealt with at once. The insects are very small, and resemble small oval eggs about 1-16in. in length, yellowish or pinkish white in colour, their limbs somewhat rudimentary, as they move about very little. Each insect, however, is provided with a long proboscis, with which it is able to pierce the bark and suck the sap of the tree. As the insect is wingless, it is doubtless carried from one tree to another by birds or through some other agency, such as the wind.

Our experience is that the best way of destroying the pest is by laying sacks or canvas on the ground round the trunk of the tree, so as to catch anything that may fall from it; then wet the parts that are attacked with soap and water, and scrape off as much as possible of the felt-like material; afterwards scrub the tree with a stiff brush dipped in strong paraffin emulsion, or with a new winter wash known as "Voss No. 1." Either of these insecticides may be syringed or sponged on; but unless the felt matter is scraped off first, it is difficult to make the insecticide break it up so that the insect is reached. When applied with a brush it should be well worked into any inequalities there may be in the bark. This operation may have to be repeated, to destroy any live eggs that remain.

The felted beech coccus belongs to the same family (the Coccidæ) as the "scale insects," and every owner of a beech tree should be on the watch for this terrible pest. In the Board of Agriculture leaflet several remedies are given, which we may set forth here. It is mentioned that, owing to the comparatively smooth nature of the bark of the beech, and also to the fact that the insects are often confined to the trunk and main branches, this pest is more easily accessible for treatment with insecticides than many others. The three formulæ given below have proved to be thoroughly efficient in destroying the coccus when applied according to instructions, and should be taken heed of.

The first is paraffin emulsion, which should be prepared as follows: Mix equal proportions of soft soap, dissolved in boiling water, and paraffin; churn them up with a force pump or syringe. When required for use add twenty times its bulk of water and again churn.

Another remedy consists of paraffin emulsion with sulphur and turpentine added. Take about half a gallon of soft water, boil and dissolve about 1lb. of common soap, add a handful of sulphur and a pint of paraffin, with about the same quantity of turpentine. Add about four gallons of soft water to this mixture and churn well together.

The third remedy is the caustic alkali wash, which is made by dissolving 1lb. of commercial soda in water, then 1lb. of crude potash or pearl ash in water. When both have been dissolved, mix the two well together and add ½lb. of soft soap. Stir well and add sufficient water to make up to ten gallons; but in preparing this mixture painted vessels of any kind must be avoided.

Apply the paraffin emulsion and the following preparations with a stiff scrubbing brush (one having the bristles also set at end being the most serviceable). Scrub the mixture well into the crevices and bifurcations of the branches, to break up the white coverings of the insects as much as possible, as we have mentioned before from our own experience. Apply these at any time between September and the first week in April; so there must be no delay. The caustic wash is essentially for the winter, but may also be applied in early spring. It is usually distributed with a spray-pump or syringe, and is very useful in treating the smaller branches of trees. Two or three sprayings at intervals of two or three days are necessary. This wash has a burning effect upon the hands of the operator, and care must be taken in using it. Close-fitting rubber gloves may be worn to protect the hands, and a rubber washer, about 2in. wide, should be fitted to the tube of the sprayer or syringe to prevent the wash running down to the hands of the operator.

Some interesting experiments were recently made with the beech trees on the estate of Mr. Archibald Grove, M.P., Pollard's Park, Chalfont St. Giles, for the extermination of the *Cryptococcus fagi*, by Messrs. Merryweather and Sons of London, in conjunction with the Board of Agriculture. After the trees had been carefully examined, it was decided to treat them with a compound consisting of a paraffin emulsion with caustic

soda, as mentioned before. This liquid was distributed through a series of portable flexible pipes by means of a high-pressure Merryweather spray pump, operated by a small petrol motor, discharging the liquid at the spraying nozzle at a pressure of about 100lb. to the square inch. By the help of specially-constructed scaling ladders supplied by the engineers it was found possible to get at close quarters with the pest, which mostly infests the trunk of the tree, and to spray the affected parts quite successfully. There is every reason to believe that this treatment, if persevered in by the owners of beech forests, will soon entirely stamp out the disease, which is making such ravages in the district.

It is to be hoped that earnest endeavours will be made to save one of the noblest of British trees from what will be, unless drastic efforts are made, absolute destruction. We cannot afford to lose any native tree, least of all the beech.

While writing of the diseases of beech trees, we must not forget that they have suffered as much in the past from drought as from insect pests. The year 1906 proved a terrible strain upon the old trees, and many of the veterans, especially on hot, sandy soils, have scarcely recovered even now. Beeches suffered severely in many places, and in such warm soils as that in the Royal Gardens, Kew, it was only by heavy manuring that decay was arrested. We mentioned some time ago an interesting example of the complete success of manuring at Kew. One tree was treated in this way and was in full leaf in November, with the tints of autumn developing their full richness, the other, left to itself, was as bare as in midwinter, exhibiting, too, every symptom of an early death. Beech trees under these conditions, with the felted beech coccus, too, infesting the stems, require assistance to maintain their vigour. If the coming summer proves anything like that of 1906, owners who value the fine trees on their estates will be wise in heavily manuring the soil over the surface roots, and, if possible, giving an occasional thorough soaking with water. Unfortunately, this is frequently impossible, but manure is generally available for such a good purpose as this. It is time and money well spent to preserve the monarchs of the forest from gradual decay; and with renewed vigour the trees are in a better condition to throw off attacks of such pests as the beech coccus.



ATTACKING THE BLIGHT.

THE WILD CAT.

THE wild cat is not yet extinct in Scotland, despite assertions to the contrary, and in those vast wildernesses now afforested there is no reason why it should not increase. Strictly nocturnal in its habits, few people ever have an opportunity of seeing one, and consequently many have arrived at the conclusion that, because they or their friends have never observed any wild cats, therefore they are extinct. Articles again and again appear in our journals affirming that the wild cat may be classed with the

dodo and the great auk, and that those caught from time to time are only the tame species which have assumed a feral life or are adulterated by a greater or less strain of the domestic species. More erroneous theories were never promulgated, and I affirm that *Felis catus* is still to be found in Scotland as pure as it was before game preservation was ever thought of. It is a simple matter to write, as many do, in high-sounding phrases about the ignorance of keepers in killing out the rarer of the fauna of our country; but it is another and very different thing to dispose of facts established by evidence of the greatest living authority. I have seen many wild cats nailed to the vermin-board of keepers, but only once have I seen what I was convinced to be a cross between *Felis catus* and *Felis domestica*. It was as large as any wild cat; but besides the taper of the tail there were other characteristics which proved a strain of the tame species. Many striped grey cats of large size have come under my observation, but there was no more difficulty in deciding that they belonged to the tame species than if they had been tortoiseshell-coloured tabbies. On the other hand, members of the wild species are quite as easily recognised. Such characteristics as their uniformity in colour; the dense tail without taper, black at the end and ringed alternately with black and grey; the beautiful, long, soft fur, warmed with russet inside the flanks; the large size, the strong muscles, the broad skull, the formidable teeth and claws, and the round cream-coloured spot on the breast, varying in size from a shilling to a florin—all these mark them as representatives of the true species of *Felis catus*. Their cry also is different from that of the domestic cat. I can remember over twenty years ago sitting all night at a cairn in which was a fox den, waiting for the first streak of daylight in



WILD CAT FROM LOCHABER.

order to try and shoot the old foxes at Crag-an-graghag, opposite Corrie Charaby, in Glen Orrin in Ross-shire. Never can I forget the cries of a pair of wild cats, somewhat resembling those indescribable noises that in town render night hideous to human beings, but of a much louder and deeper tone. The wild unearthly cries, as they answered each other in the stillness of the night, echoing from the opposite side of the glen, almost filled me with a feeling of awe. It is impossible to conceive any sound more harsh and discordant than the cry of the wild cat.

A few years ago a keeper of my acquaintance secured a situation in a mountainous district in the north of Argyllshire. During the half-dozen years he has been there he has never seen a wild cat in its native solitude, nor, except for his traps set for foxes, would he be aware that there is a wild cat on the ground under his charge. The fact remains, however, that not a few, lacking the proverbial cunning of the fox, blundered into the traps. On exhibiting, at a meeting of the Edinburgh Field Naturalists' Society, about a dozen of the wild cats trapped by the keeper referred to, a report of it got into the newspapers, and as the result a lively discussion, continuing for some months, took place in the *Oban Times*. One gentleman, copying from Dr. Edward Hamilton's book, stated that Egyptian cats were brought into this country about 500 B.C., and crossed with the *Felis catus*, evolving a breed which was classified by Linnaeus as *Felis catus ferus*. With all due respect for Dr. Edward Hamilton's opinions and for the classification of the great Swedish naturalist, I affirm that *Felis catus* exists in Scotland as pure now as in the days when Egyptian cats were first introduced. Crosses, as has been said, can be distinguished at

once. If *Felis catus* crossed with *Felis domestica* 2,000 years ago, it is not too much to affirm that they would have continued crossing, with the result that the characteristics of the wild species would long since have disappeared. Sir Herbert Maxwell says, "The true wild cat is increasing in Knoydart." Why shouldn't it? In such districts as Glenstrathfarer and those remote wildernesses on the west coast of Inverness-shire, where for many miles the hillsides are clad with natural wood and scrub, the wild cat finds a congenial home. Few, if any, of our landed proprietors wish the extermination of the rarer fauna of our country. As is well known, however, foxes hold their own against all the expedients which human ingenuity can devise, and their destruction in the Highlands is a necessity in the interests of sheep-farming. That wild cats blunder into the traps is unfortunate. The most lonely and inaccessible mountain cairns constitute their haunts, and, as a consequence, they are seldom seen during the day.

Sir Herbert Maxwell's statement that the wild cat is increasing is not a rash assertion. Securing a number of specimens from the west of Inverness-shire, he sent them to the greatest living authority, Dr. Oldfield Thomas, Director of the Natural History Department of the British Museum, who pronounced them "indistinguishable from pure *Felis catus*." In the face of such an authority, what is to be gained by continuous assertions that the wild cat is extinct? Surely it would be better to act as Sir Herbert has so sensibly done and to investigate the matter instead of indulging in self-assertion and dogmatism in an atmosphere of uncertainty. The length of the entrails is suggested as a test of the genuineness of the wild species, these being much shorter than in the domestic breed. This I regard as a dangerous test. The food of carnivorous animals does not require to undergo the same ordeal in order to convert it into flesh as does that, say, of the sheep, which requires a much more complicated process, and consequently a greater length of bowel, to convert its vegetable diet into flesh. We have, however, no evidence to prove that a domestic cat which takes to a feral life in the woods will beget progeny differing in the length of the entrails from *Felis catus*.

In the last issue of the *Oban Times* for 1907 a paragraph appeared stating that considerable destruction among poultry had taken place at a farm in Lochaber. Foxes were blamed, and a gamekeeper was consulted in the matter. Setting a number of traps for the depredator, he was rewarded the following morning by securing a very large specimen of the wild cat. It was sent to Edinburgh for preservation, and a photograph of it is here reproduced. A few days later a paragraph appeared in the *Scotsman* asserting that for some years back the ravages wrought by wild cats in the district of Lochaber and Eastern Argyllshire had become annually more pronounced, notwithstanding the *ipse dixit* of certain naturalists that the species is on the verge of extinction in the Highlands.

A shepherd on the estate of Ardgour had his attention attracted to his hen-run by a commotion among the fowls, and with the aid of his dogs he managed to destroy the cat. It was a large, finely-marked animal, measuring 3ft. 2in. from snout to tip of tail, and the carcass has been sent to a taxidermist for preservation. Ten hens and two ducks lay dead, and several others afterwards succumbed to the injuries they had received. In Kingussie, that fruitful nursery of rare notabilities in natural history, a pair of wild cats may be seen in captivity on the premises of Mr. Macfarlane, the well-known sporrans manufacturer. As that gentleman takes a pride in exhibiting them to any naturalists, those who are sceptical as to *Felis catus* still existing in Scotland might do worse than pay a visit to inspect the cats in question at Kingussie. A year or two ago they effected their escape, and it was found the following morning that the hen-run had been invaded and twenty-seven hens, two turkeys, five ducks and two pigeons destroyed. By the aid of traps they were again secured. One of them, however, is now minus a foot. Strange as it may appear, though they are male and female, they have never bred in confinement. The invasion of poultry-houses by the wild cat is not a new trait of that marauder. "When driven from the higher altitudes by the rigour of the weather, one of these animals sometimes takes up its residence at no great distance from a dwelling and, entering the hen-houses or out-buildings, carries off fowls in the most audacious manner." So records Charles St. John in his charming book, "Wild Sports in the Highlands," published between sixty and seventy years ago.

TOM SPEEDY.

SHOOTING.

THE MONGOLIAN PHEASANT (PHASIANUS MONGOLICUS).

BY A HEAD-KEEPER.

IN the issue of COUNTRY LIFE for November 30th last, a small paragraph was published relative to the straying propensities of the Mongolian pheasant. In the writer's opinion this is much overrated. All pheasants have this straying tendency, and on a properly fed and "well-driven" estate the Mongolian is no worse than others of his species. If this pheasant has a drawback it is that the habit of "jukking" is more prevalent owing to the formation of the legs. In a fox-hunting country, of course, this is a fault. The crossed variety, however, go up earlier in life, if anything, than other pheasants. This bird is, practically speaking, a recent introduction. In Mr. Tegetmeier's latest work on pheasants a quotation is made from the Hon. Walter Rothschild's letter to a contemporary of June 20th, 1903, and as that gentleman was the first to obtain a supply from Carl Hagenbeck of Hamburg, we have about eight or nine years' knowledge of that variety in this country. The writer was privileged in 1901 to have a dozen eggs from a well-known sporting nobleman, and he well remembers they were regarded by his employer as worth nearly their weight in gold. From those twelve eggs twelve chicks were safely hatched and, with the exception of one trodden underfoot by the hen which mothered them, all safely came to maturity. It would be of great service if travellers could be persuaded to give us some information as to the natural food of each variety in the country, or countries, of which they are native. This is not unimportant, as different countries must have different cereals and seeds on which these birds thrive naturally, and if we had reliable information on this head it would be easier to rear varieties foreign to this country.

The Mongolian has come to stay, or, as Mr. Nelson Zambra aptly expresses it, "The Mongolian, and its crosses, are the birds for our coverts." He writes from the Scottish side of the Border, where wet and cold make up the prevailing wintry climate. A hardy bird is required, and *Mongolicus* is all that, and more. He is a larger pheasant for table use; his flesh is reported to be quite equal to that of the home bird. He flies well up on shooting days, and he is much easier to rear. A cross between the Mongolian and the ordinary ring-necked, or even the old green-necked, pheasant is not so subject to infantile chick mortality on the rearing-field, and if turned out among the ordinary pheasants before breeding-time, no better birds can be reared or brought to the gun than the semi-Mongolian. It must be borne in mind that the cock bird Mongolian does not show his full plumage until between eighteen months and two years of age; consequently, that must be the time of his maturity and greatest vigour. To those who are intending to try the cross the writer would give the following useful practical hints. Have the movable pens, made with two handles, or shafts, projecting, so that two men can easily lift them from place to place. In one pen put a cock Mongolian to five ordinary hen pheasants, in another put an ordinary cock bird to four Mongolian hens, and so on all round; this plan, the writer can guarantee, is the best yet tried. The cock Mongolian is a more vigorous male than the ordinary bird, and five hens are not too large a harem; on the other hand, more than four Mongolian hens would be too many for the native cock bird. This arrangement has succeeded so admirably for three seasons that the writer can thoroughly recommend it. Next see that sufficient drinking fountains (flat, if possible, not more than 3in. in height) are provided. Let one, or more, of these be filled with clear water and placed with the feed in the position to which the pen is shifted each morning; this should be done by a sideways movement. The two men should carefully lift the pen bodily, moving it as gently as possible, only lifting it sufficiently to clear the drinking vessels and placing it down as gently in its new position. This system leaves the eggs laid by the hen birds on the previous day openly exposed, ready to pick up and put in the basket, and obviates the use of the landing-net and the egg breakages which otherwise occur, no matter how careful the operator may be. For next season the writer has no movable pens, but plenty of warm heather in the coverts, so he has cocks and hens of the Mongolian strain kept in the permanent aviaries ready for turning out when the winter is over; they will then be allowed to mix with the ordinary pheasants in the woods, where plenty of feed is scattered, and, no pheasants having been shot this season, the hope may be entertained that 1908 may show a good sporting strain for the guns. In this case, of course, catching cages will go down before October 1st, and the pure Mongolian birds will be replaced in the aviaries for one more season. They are too valuable to send over guns until after their second breeding season.

The writer has noticed some disparaging remarks made as to the Mongolian; but there is more in this than meets the eye, and he has heard the reasons. Weighing well the pros and cons, the gamekeeper who pins his faith on the Mongolian cross will not be

disappointed. In a few years' time the blood will be distributed among the woods of these islands; and to try to stem the breeding of the half-Mongolian will be like the old lady of history, who endeavoured to sweep out the rising tide of the Atlantic Ocean with a besom. The fact must not be lost sight of that every gamekeeper wants a bird easy to rear, and we have it in this strain. There is a great deal of climatic difference in the British Isles, and the Mongolian fares as well in the cold coverts of Scotland as in the warm sunny woods of the South of England, and in the damp, humid atmosphere of the Emerald Isle as in the deep glens and hilly covert-sides of the Welsh mountains. Anyone doubting the strength and vigour of the Mongolian should try the handling of a full-grown Mongolian cock pheasant in the flesh; take him up from the aviary perch to pack or remove to another place. He will be rather surprised at the handful this noble bird is; it is not everyone who could handle him successfully. The writer has found from experience that maize and buckwheat are the best staple foods for the birds in the aviary; the former keeps them warm and fat during the winter months, and should be stopped as the laying season comes on—the fat prevents the production of a good egg supply. Wheat, barley, rice, buckwheat, with a sprinkling of mustard seed, should then be scattered at their feeding-places among the barley rakings put down in the previous autumn. Artichokes, turnips and potatoes thrown about will also be a palatable change of diet, and the rest can safely be left to Nature and a better season than the past one.

INCREASE OF BLUE HARES.

MR. SETON GORDON, in his interesting notes, has been writing lately about the increase of blue hares in Scotland—always excepting those parts in which the foxes and the golden eagles are many. He is, no doubt, right in his conjecture that one reason for the increase is that in these days, when there is so little shooting over dogs, the hares scuttle away from the beaters up to the tops, and never come within the danger zone of the guns at all. At the same time, there is another reason, very potent, which he does not name, and that is that on a great many grouse moors there is a standing order that the hares are not to be shot. The motive of this is not at all that the hares are so valuable that they have to be preserved, but that they are so worthless that they are not worth the carrying down. The hares live, as a rule, rather on the high places of the moor, whither the game-cart cannot easily come; and if any large number of grouse are being killed, the panniers of the game-carrying ponies are pretty well burdened with them alone, and there is no place or means of transport for the hares. This is the consideration to which many of these hares owe their lives. Young blue hares (the leverets) are not bad eating, and at any age they make good soup, but the adult blue hare, as a solid dish, is a very poor companion at the dinner-table. Nor is it to be said that the blue hare is any more interesting as a mark for the gun. A very few blue hare drives are enough to last most shooters for their lives. It is true that it is an enterprise which takes the gunner up to the high ridges from which he gets a grand view and plenty of time to enjoy it before the hares begin to arrive. If he is not a deerstalker (in which sport he will be conducted to points of very much finer view) all this may be a pure delight to him, but the poor hares, which often "sit up and beg" as if for mercy, on the horizon, do not give a sporting entertainment, except for a very juvenile gunner.

FUMIGATION OF COOPS, ETC.

The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries have recently issued a leaflet for which the gamekeeper would do well to apply. It is on fumigation with hydrocyanic acid. The first use, from the Board's point of view, of the fumigation is to kill off insects injurious to fruit trees and other plant life, but it is also efficacious for poultry houses, etc., which have become infested with verminous insects, and the gamekeeper might find it of great use for his pheasant-coops, and pheasantries generally and their utensils, as well as for his kennels and ferret hutches. The idea is, of course, not a new one, and has before this been advocated incidentally in some of the leaflets of the Board. This is the first time that it has been given the dignity of a leaflet to itself, in which all its modes of use are set out very fully. The fumigation, properly applied, will destroy insect life in all its stages except the egg, so re-iteration may be needed to catch the newly-hatched before they have laid the foundation of a new generation. That is a detail which the keeper ought to be able to make out for himself. This leaflet, like the rest of the series, can be obtained by application by letter to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, 4, Whitehall Place, London, S.W. The letter applying need not be stamped, nor need a stamp be enclosed for the reply.

WHAT ARE "VERMIN."

Just now, while hedges are still bare, and many kinds of life are waking from the more or less slumbrous state in which they have passed the winter—before, too, the season at which their young ones are born—now is the gamekeeper's golden occasion for the destruction of vermin. As for what he will rightly regard as vermin, that is rather a disputed question; but there is no doubt that the common tendency of the keeper is to answer it rather too liberally, in such a way as to give himself a fairly free hand to deal out indiscriminate death to all that does not figure actually on the game list. It begins to be a point much in dispute whether he should regard the weasel as his enemy, or rather as a friend, because of the destruction wrought by this fierce little beast on the rats, which are without any doubt at all among the worst enemies of the keeper. Hedgehogs, again, beyond all question, are on the black list, but how about moles? This is a point on which it would be very desirable that some fuller information could be obtained. The mole has hardly been regarded as likely to do harm to birds'

eggs, but Mr. F. E. R. Fryer, in the shooting volume of the COUNTRY LIFE Library of Sport, has put it on record that he personally had experience of a mole digging up under a partridge's nest and abstracting eggs, one after the other, through the trap-door, as it were. One bit of positive evidence such as this has to go a long way in the weighing against a large number of general statements of the kind of "Oh, I don't suppose moles do much harm to the partridges." We want more evidence about the moles, however; this of Mr. Fryer's may have been only one of a small criminal and poaching class among the moles. Then, if our further evidence convicts the sleek black blind man, we want evidence also as to the terms in which the weasel stands with him, for this must influence our verdict on the latter suspect. The whole subject is a complicated, involved one, with many inter-actions and reactions. One has to go delicately. Probably we may make a hard-and-fast general rule to spare owls and kestrels; but even this has to admit of exceptions. Occasionally there are instances beyond dispute of owls and kestrels also harrying round the pheasant coops. Owls probably come for the mice that come after the pheasants' food, for the little pheasants are safe under wing by the time the nocturnal birds come abroad, and so it is only accidentally that the owls disturb the pheasants. But now and again a kestrel doubtless falls into bad ways and has to suffer. It is a vast mistake, however, on account of this one depraved instance, to condemn all his useful and beautiful kind. But as to the moles, it is especially necessary now that we should know their habits better, because

they have been increasing lately at a very great rate, and any harm they do must be largely augmented.

CAPRICES OF THE WOODCOCK.

Accounts continue to come in showing more and more how abnormal the distribution of woodcock has been and is this season. We were noticing lately the unusually large number found in the Eastern Counties. In Cornwall a record bag of these birds was made, and in all the Western Counties of England, certainly as far East as Dorsetshire, they are or have been in greater number than ever known before. The last phrase is a large one, but, we think, not too large. In Caithness-shire, on the other hand, as we are informed by a correspondent who has lately come down from there, they have never (or hardly ever) had so poor a season for cock. The movements of the birds in Continental Europe seem to have been no less abnormal, and it appears that they have been in larger numbers, late on in the season, in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, than is at all common. Is there any connection between their numbers there and their scarcity in the far North of Scotland, and are we to assume that the large numbers in the South of England have come over from a more southern part of the Continent? Possibly it may be so; but it is safer to assume our ignorance of the habits of this most capricious bird. Certainly we have not yet solved the motives for these apparent caprices.

[FURTHER NOTES ON SHOOTING WILL BE FOUND ON OUR LATER PAGES.]

ON THE GREEN.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

YORKSHIRE BEATEN.

MR. JACKSON and Mr. Taylor, for Yorkshire, have been beaten by Warwickshire (Mr. Bainbridge and Mr. Hill) in the Cricketers' County Tournament after a very notable match. Now the one pair and now the other was "upper dog," but the losers were "on logs" at a critical point near the finish, after being four down. Yet even so they were beaten on the last green. Mr. Jackson is one of those reformed cricketers who set himself to work (so I am told) to learn the proper golf swing for a whole fortnight before he attempted to hit the ball; and if this is true (Mr. H. Forster certainly adopted this plan with the greatest success) it has paid him well and may be taken as an example by others. Even as a cricketer he looked as if he would make a fine golfer if he took to the game, for he never seemed to bother himself to hit the ball very hard, even when he was well set. A man who can carry the "Don't press" maxims of golf into his cricket ought naturally to have an aptitude for the game to which they are specially applied.

A NEW DRIVER.

One begins to wish now and then that people (especially Americans) were not quite so ingenious. Mr. Haskell, who invented the rubber-cored ball (although our Law Courts say he did not), has certainly given us something which makes the game less of a test of skill than it used to be, and which has given much trouble in the way of altering courses to suit it. A gentleman is now offering to a long-suffering public a club with quicksilver in its secret "innards." The idea is that the quicksilver runs up the shaft of the club while the club is lifted above the golfer's head, but back into the club-head again as the club descends. At the moment of impact, therefore, the club has its own momentum reinforced by that of the quicksilver. Personally, I should not have thought that the quicksilver would have moved quickly enough, which just shows how easily an unscientific man may go wrong about a little matter of this kind. There would be no harm in all this, however, if it were not for the result, which again I should not have anticipated, that this club, thus burdened, will drive the ball 20 yds. further (so we are told) than the ordinary club. That is where the trouble begins. Has this seemingly innocent invention taken 10 per cent. off the length of our courses all round? For that is what it figures out at—20 yds. on an ordinary drive, say of 200 yds., and he would be a greedy Jehu who would ask for more. We shall be absolutely compelled to standardisation of the weapons of the game soon, if this kind of thing continues. The island cannot stretch itself.

MR. MACFIE TO THE FORE.

It is like old times to read of Mr. Macfie in golfing triumph again. What is not like old times is reading of him as receiving three strokes from anybody—any amateur, let us say. All this is suggested by his win at Biarritz, where he had Mr. E. Martin-Smith, giving him three, against him in the final heat of a recent tournament. To do any good at Biarritz the long game has to be straight as a line and the short game rather straighter, and this is more within the practical politics of Mr. Macfie than of most others. The long driver does not have much advantage of his strength and length. Nevertheless, Mr. Angus Hambro in his record score of 70 (record, that is, for an amateur competition) was no doubt served well by his driving. It is a score which ought not to obscure altogether the almost equally fine one which Mr. Pedro Heeren made on the same day, viz., 71. This score, with two off, won the handicap prize.

HOW TO SELECT A GOOD MAN.

I am very glad to see that Fulford (Horace), who has been at Northwood, was appointed to the Bridlington Club as its resident professional. I am always glad to see the appointment of our old Westward Ho! boy, both for the sake of the club which appoints him (for, naturally, a boy brought up at Westward Ho! is *ipso facto* better than a boy "raised" elsewhere) and also for the sake of the man who gets the job. This Fulford is a brother of Henry, who is, I think, at the Hawkeshead Club near Bradford. But besides the appointment, I like the way it was made. Having fined down the list of applicants for the post to four, the club set these four playing on

their links, and I do not quite know whether it was the man who proved himself the best player that was selected, or the man who showed the highest human qualities—of which there is no better test than this great game. They used to say that the House of Commons was the best place for showing what a man was made of; but that was before all the world played golf.

THE PROFESSIONALS IN THE RIVIERA.

Our British professionals on the Riviera seem to have arranged matters very satisfactorily between them; and the French, as a thrifty people, will have to bear with a native grace, but doubtless a hidden pang, the taking of so many francs out of their fine country. They have had an adequate return, though, in the quality of the golf shown. At Nice, first Vardon and then Braid played the part of showman; and then at Hyères it was Taylor who really did give them fireworks of brilliancy in that second round of 67, and showed at the same time how queer a game is golf, how much a matter of subjective suggestion, even in the elevated altitudes in which these champions beat the ball along. For he was not beating it very satisfactorily, until all of sudden he did a hole of close on 200 yds. in one, with a full brassie stroke, and thereafter played rather as if he expected to do the same every time he tried. That is, of course, the right spirit, and the result was a record round of 67, knocking out all previous records by no less than four strokes. And as for the Frenchmen, Hoylake and La Boullie come near to being avenged, and the strain to which the *entente cordiale* is being subjected becomes severe. At Costabelle, however, on the newly-opened course, Massy had quite his share of credit, but it looked rather as if the main programme was being begun all over again, for Vardon led the field easily, just as he did at the opening of the campaign at Nice. Braid was rather an indifferent third to him and Massy, and Taylor a not very close fourth. This new course seems to have been the most trying of all, and 75 was the best score returned.

ROWE IN FORM.

There is at least one of the "London professionals" who did not go in for the tournament (I presume that his place of abode qualifies him if he had cared to enter) who has been playing quite remarkable golf all the time that the competition has been in progress. This is Rowe of Ashdown Forest. I have not been playing with him (thank Heaven!), but he has been playing a good deal with one or another, and during the whole period that this foursomes tournament has been going I do not believe that he has once been round in over 75. The best single round he did was a 65, which is, I think, two strokes better than his own previous best for the course in any condition, and I know that it is three better than my own best. During far the greater part of the time the course was very short, and on the afternoon that he made his 65 seven holes could be reached from the tee, and only one could not be reached in two. If you figure this out in terms of perfect golf—i.e., seven threes, a five, and the rest fours—you will find that it works out at 66. Rowe went one better than this. But, besides, it has to be remembered that the Ashdown Forest course, with its sloping greens and approaches which never flatter the player, is, perhaps, the hardest in the world on which to get "the figure" at each hole. I think the best work that Rowe did at all consisted of two rounds of 70 and 73 on a certain Saturday when the course was stretched at full medal length; but the total of his work for the weeks is a very remarkable one, and if he keeps going at anything like that pace he will take some catching, even among such company as the open championship competition brings together. H. G. H.

THE BELL INN, SANDWICH.

It is stated that the Bell Inn at Sandwich is in the market. The name of the old going hostelry must take the memories of many golfers back at least twenty years, when Sandwich was first made the home of Southern golf in England through the efforts of Dr. Laidlaw Purves and the late Mr. Henry Lamb. In those days the Bell Inn was a very modest structure in one of the side streets abutting on the river. When a band of golfers turned up for one of the big competitions, or to spend a week-end, the dimensions of the humble little coffee-room were inadequate to seat all at one sitting the hungry

golfers who wanted to lunch or to dine. Sometimes one had to book a chair at the *tab e d'hôte* as one puts a ball down on the rack at the tee, and then saunter with a pipe outside until the occupant of the chair had satisfied his conscience and his appetite by dining both well and wisely. When the fine golfing quality of the Sandwich links was revealed, the number of golfers who flocked to the old Cinque Ports town steadily increased, especially at the week-ends. More accommodation was needed; the old inn was taken down, and the present handsome structure was erected. The Bell Inn was made the headquarters of the Sandwich golfers, whose access to the rooms was separated from that of the general public. Since those early years of Southern golf Deal and Prince's have opened up similar golfing ground in the same neighbourhood; but Sandwich, with its old Bell Inn, has a right to be looked upon, by London golfers, at any rate, with a little of the veneration which surrounds St. Andrews in the North.

LORD DUDLEY AND AUSTRALIAN GOLF.

The appointment of Lord Dudley as Governor-General of Australia ought to be heartily welcomed by our kinsmen there who take an interest in golf. Lord Dudley has two great qualities which should be part and parcel of the character of the golfing missionary. He plays the game well himself, and he has studied the whole golfing art widely and deeply. In addition to these personal attributes his enthusiasm for the game is very great. When acting as Lord-Lieutenant in Ireland some years ago he arranged several amateur and professional tournaments, taking part himself as one of the keenest players in the single and foursome matches that were arranged. At one time, just after Lord Dudley took to the game seriously, Andrew Kirkaldy used to accompany him, and there can be no doubt that Lord Dudley profited greatly from the instruction as well as the hard practice which he then subjected himself to against Andrew as his opponent. A recent book on the game published in Australia showed that golf is every year becoming more popular there, and, from the point of view of promoting its interests in the Colonies, assuredly no better selection could have been made than that of the new Governor-General.

CLUBS AND THE LICENSING BILL.

Golf clubs have never had anything to fear from an examination of their internal arrangements with reference to the supply of liquor to members and guests. Their policy has always been clean and above suspicion. It was, perhaps, on that account that so much heated resentment was expressed by golfers at the time the law was passed a few years ago compelling all clubs to register and to pay a registration fee of 5s. So far the golf clubs have stood the test thoroughly, as everyone who knew anything about their management all over the country were perfectly certain they would. All that the promoters of the Act have obtained on the golfing side of the account is the small sum of £800 or £900 for the national exchequer for registration fees. But the new Bill of this session may go a little further in entrenching upon the ordered freedom of golf clubs. Apart from the probability that an effort will be made to raise the amount of the annual registration fee, there is the proposal of the police inspector walking into the smoking and luncheon rooms to see how the members are comporting themselves. The tired player asleep in the easy chair, with the partly exhausted contents of a cup of coffee and a glass of liqueur at his elbow, may impress the agent of official surveillance with the conviction that here, indeed, is an awful example of abused hospitality, and he may report accordingly. That, of course, would be unjust, but it is official action which may be conceivable on the part of one too zealously wrapped in official routine, and not caring very much whether his conclusions were justly strict or not. Some may think it rather a symptom of decadence in national character, as illustrated by schemes of modern legislation, to make the police even in plain clothes an almost indispensable companion of innocent and healthy recreation such as a game of golf.

WHAT IS A "RECOGNISED" CLUB?

In the advertisements of the amateur championship and other open tournaments promoted by golf clubs for the benefit of amateurs, the phrase is invariably used that the competitor who enters must be a member of a "recognised" golf club. But it fails always to say "recognised" by whom, or by what authority. The principle of recognition is, apparently, left to the liberal interpretation of the Amateur Championship Committee and the local committee who may be organising an open tournament. In that case they must have some basis of conviction upon which the qualifying provision is to be settled and worked. What is it? Apparently the governing principle is that the member must belong to a club which is properly constituted in having an executive authority through which the membership works and is controlled, that it has a club-house and a green and that subscriptions are paid for the general maintenance of the membership to enjoy the game as a constituted club. But this is only an inference from observation of the way in which the supposed definition works. One of the outstanding features of modern golf which is widening rapidly is the growth of societies belonging to professions. A member, say, of the Solicitors' Golfing Society who belonged to no other body of golfers, as a regular member of a club, might conceivably have his entry for the amateur championship ruled out on the ground that, though otherwise eligible as a player, he was not a member of a "recognised" club on the basis sketched above. So far the need for coming to a definite decision has not arisen; but the amateur championship authorities ought not on that account to lose sight of the point. The awkward, combative, litigious-loving individual even among golfers comes along the path when he is least expected.

A. J. R.

WESTWARD HO VERSUS DEAL FOR THE AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP.

By A. C. CROOME.

WHEN the question of the respective merits of Deal and Westward Ho! was being argued last autumn, I was unable to join in the discussion, because I had never seen Deal. I repaired the omission last January, and now volunteer my opinion, because I understand that if another English course is selected to

be the scene of the amateur championship it is likely to be one of the two. I have no doubt that the authorities acted wisely in choosing Deal for the open championship; the most considerable competitors wanted to play there, and the course is admirably suited for the scoring business. If the same wisdom is shown again Westward Ho! will receive the amateurs. At Deal the holes are long, the turf is excellent and the putting greens are large and true. But the golf is conspicuously deficient in the quality of fineness, which is what is wanted by amateurs playing matches, and is provided at Westward Ho! as it is nowhere else except at St. Andrews. There are three one-shot holes at Deal. One is the notorious Sandy Parlour, which calls for a blind tee shot over a hazard something like the Maiden on to a green almost as hard to miss as that which the Sandwich hazard guards. The other two are on level ground, and have rather large flat greens. They are guarded in front, the one by a trench, the other by a Sahara of sand, which make a running shot impossible, but guide the eye of the pitcher in estimating distance. Both have some side hazards, but only a very crooked shot finds them. A really fine player, a Laidlay or a Macfie, gets little reward for his power of club at such holes. The short holes at Westward Ho! are not, perhaps, one of the chief glories of the course, but they are more interesting individually and collectively than these. Two of them provide the player with some opportunity of choosing his shot, and the putting greens, both by their keenness and their contours, have the power of bringing out the latent error in an imperfectly-struck ball. The third can only be approached by a pitching shot; but the green is comparatively small and accentuates the difference between a perfect shot and one that is called good only because it is not bad. Most of the longer holes at Deal have something of the same characteristic as the short ones. At the first, second, third, fifth, seventh, ninth, tenth, eleventh, thirteenth and eighteenth it matters very little whether the tee shot finishes in the centre of the course or on either edge of it. There is no necessity to lay the shot down close to one particular spot in order to make the next easier. The holes can be taken in the figures without conspicuous accuracy of driving. Of the five holes not yet mentioned, two are really fine; the sixth, where the green is a plateau bounded on the right by sand-hills, but open for a certain distance on the left, being particularly good. There a really well-played drive should make a three possible, and anything else, other than a four, difficult. The long eighth goes round the corner a bit, so that by hugging the rough on the left with the tee shot some valuable yards of distance can be gained. I imagine that a very long driver might have visions of getting up in two; and those who drive only the same distance as other people need to place the second shot accurately to make the approach at all easy, for the hole is hard to come at sideways. The remaining three, the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth—the third may also be classed with them—have their greens in mountainous country and the sides of the mountains are abrupt. Therefore, in addition to their many beauties, they have the defect that the man who has placed long shots on the greens cannot feel satisfied that he has achieved his success entirely by his own unaided skill. Fortune has something to say in the matter.

At Westward Ho! the two-shot holes are less perfect in length than at Deal, and their putting greens are less uniformly excellent. I am not implying that the length of the holes or the greens are anything like bad; when one is comparing two things which are among the best of their kind it is necessary to be almost hypercritical. The point in which the Westward Ho! two-shot holes beat those at Deal is just the point which is essential to the highest pleasure of amateurs playing matches with one another. Each of the two shots has to be placed. Perhaps the quality of the golf is best shown by a criticism passed on it by a famous and frequent winner of the open championship. He said: "I should like to have a fortnight's practice here before the championship; there are such a lot of dashed difficult fours; and the game seems easy when you go elsewhere." Difficult fours are just what the amateur wants. When he has mastered them he feels he has done something worth doing. He will find ten of them at Westward Ho! and the second may be taken as typical. True, the tenth and eleventh are even finer, but it is better to take a fair average specimen. In front of the second teeing ground is a large patch of low rushes, intersected by ditches; this hazard can only catch a bad top. Further on, right on the line of the hole, is a round patch of "fog." A big shot by a long driver will just carry this, and give the player of it a half-iron approach. The man who is very accurate rather than very long may play to skirt this patch on the right; he must not slice into another patch still more to the right. If he places his ball up this alley he also will have an iron shot up to the pin, but it will be slightly longer, and will have to be played at a more difficult angle than that of the Jehu who has carried everything. Finally, there is plenty of room short of the fog for the man who prefers to trust his second rather than his tee shot,

and if he brings his second off successfully his brassie will have done extra good work. My opinion is that this sort of golf will appeal to men who want to win holes rather than to get figures,

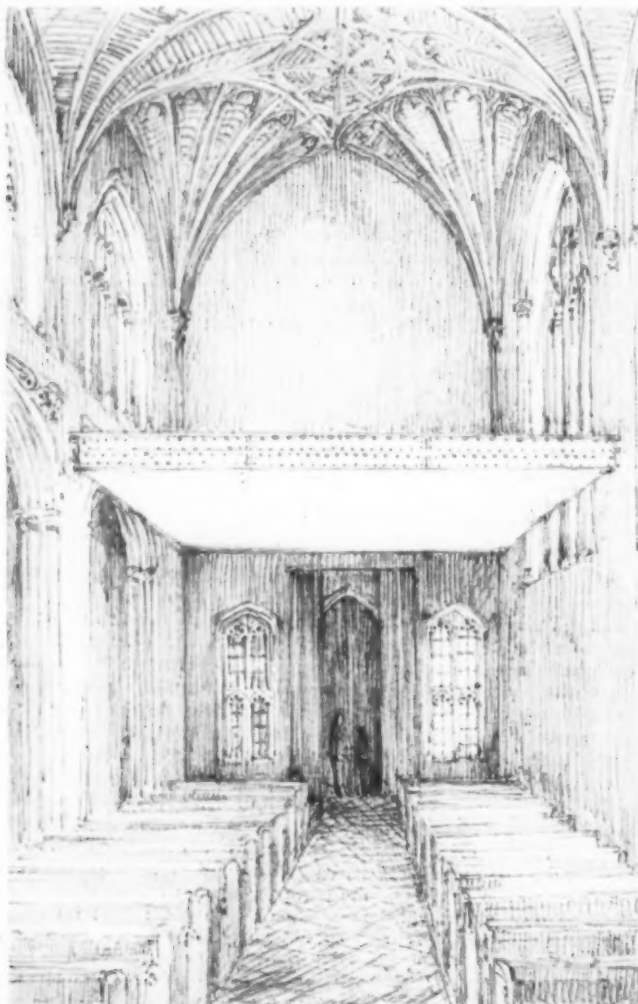
and I think that if the amateurs are sent to Westward Ho! they will confirm it, adding an expression of thanks to the powers that be for sending them there.

CORRESPONDENCE.

RESTORATION WORK AT WINCHESTER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—You have lately adverted to the restoration work going on at Winchester Cathedral, and have rightly praised the skilful manner in which that priceless fabric is being saved by the introduction of new foundations. You have, moreover, criticised the work going on above ground. You have done so very fairly, though perhaps not in a way of which Mr. Jackson would wholly approve, and I must say, in his defence, that the pointing of the aisle vaulting, which he has—rightly or wrongly—reset, is drying out to an imperceptible grey, and is no longer "black" as Mr. Thackeray Turner complained. But if adverse criticism is just now deserved at Winchester, it is not for what was happening at the Minster, but for what is happening at the College Chapel. It suffered in the last century from the ultra-Gothic prejudices of Mr. Butterfield, who tore out the splendid and historically-invaluable Wren screen and panelling, from which the dealers have since made so gigantic a profit at the College's expense. At that time this immense sacrifice was considered necessary on the score of architectural purity. Now an attempt is being made to alter this late Gothic gem into the semblance of the most business-like modern railway station. To gain a few feet of floor room—I am told, but believe this must be gossip, that it is for the convenience of lady visitors—iron girders have been thrust across the chapel, breaking every original line and curve, bisecting one of the north windows and one of the south arches and throwing the fan vaulting wholly out of proportion and harmony. And between the iron girders some very scientific preparation forms a substantial floor, of which the City Council's surveyor will, I am sure, approve. I send you a sketch of the position last week, and I shudder to think what the appearance will be next week, when the "embellishments" will be introduced and when the frontal—I suppose of cast iron—accentuates the terrible lines that will maim this charming bit of fourteenth century work. We have lived through an age of "restoration" that has needlessly cast out a considerable number of galleries that were quite of harmonious composition and of architectural merit, and has rightly removed a much larger number that were very nearly as offensive and out of place as that which is in process of erection at William of Wykeham's foundation. We had been beginning to flatter ourselves that we were entering upon a more intelligent and discriminating era. How disappointing, therefore, it is to



WINCHESTER COLLEGE CHAPEL.
Showing the Iron Girders of Gallery.



WINCHESTER COLLEGE CHAPEL.
The East Window.

find a corporation that is entrusted not only with the care of one of our most valued groups of historical buildings, but also with the education of a considerable section of the picked youth of the day, guilty of the Philistinism for which our grandfathers have been so severely blamed.—M. A.

FOXES IN TREES

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—It is by no means unusual for foxes to make their lairs in trees, and the fact that they do so is well known. I recollect that at one time there was a tree in Stapleford Park, in the Cottesmore country, that generally held a fox. If my memory does not deceive me, there was also at one time a tree-haunting fox in the Duke of Beaufort's country. But not only do foxes occasionally make their lairs in trees, but they frequently take refuge in them when hunted, and, as your correspondent says, not seldom escape by doing so. Some years ago a fox hunted by the South Cheshire took refuge in a tree at Wrenbury Mosses; and not long after, Thatcher, then huntsman to the Cottesmore, killed a fox under a tree. Looking up he saw another crouched in the branches about 30ft. or more from the ground. I was not out, but I was hunting with the Cottesmore and heard of it. One of my terriers put a fox out of a pollard willow not very long ago. A fox cannot climb as a cat can, but he is light and active, and the least inclination in the trunk, a very rough bark and, still better for him, some ivy, make it easy for a fox to scramble up. I cannot call to mind exactly where I heard it, but I have been told of a fox which occupied a disused nest of hawk or crow in a tree, and there is a sketch in the "Life of 'Gentleman' Smith" of a fox springing from a high tree in Savernake Forest. The fox is active, full of resource and, if much hunted, he will find out refuges where his adversaries do not always think of looking for him.—X.

BADGERS LYING OUT IN DAYTIME.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be very much obliged if any of your readers could give me any information about the habits of badgers in this country, especially as to their lying outside their earths during the daytime. I am aware that they are in the way of doing this in Norway in the summer months; also that they are sometimes found by the foxhounds here; but I have always ascribed that to their having been stopped out of the earths. Hitherto I have looked on them as never lying out voluntarily; but a friend, who has done a great deal of badger-hunting, now tells me that in his opinion they often lie out very near the mouth of their burrows. He judges this to be the case from

the excitement into which the dogs are sometimes thrown the moment they approach the neighbourhood of the earth. This is often so intense that he does not think it possible to account for it merely by the fact of the badgers having been about there during the previous night. He thinks it can only be due to the badgers having lain out near the mouth of the burrows and running in when they hear the dogs coming.—A. J.

EARTH-WORMS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In the town in which I live is a public garden, through which runs a broad asphalted path. On some mornings, especially after rain in the night, this path is covered with worms, sometimes so thickly that one can hardly avoid treading on them. If a hot sun follows by midday their dried-up corpses strew the ground. Can anyone inform me: (1) Why the worms leave their earthy bed to crawl over a hard asphalted path? (2) Why the birds do not eat them before the sun dries them up?—EAST DEVON.

A GOLDEN ORIOLE IN CAPTIVITY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Readers of your valued paper who are lovers of birds may be interested by the fact that I possess a golden oriole, who will be three years old in June next. As far as I know, it is the only specimen of an oriole brought up in captivity. Nowhere have I been able to obtain any information about this bird, and at the Zoological Gardens, when I applied, I was told that they keep no specimens of these birds because of the difficulties inherent to bringing them up and the special care they require. The oriole in my possession was taken out of the nest in the Department of the Corrège (France), where some of these birds are to be found, although in small numbers, during the summer months, before they emigrate back to their country, Africa. The oriole is very shy and reserved, each family living apart. They do not gather in bands. The one I have was brought up on the yellow of a hard egg, ants' eggs and little crickets caught in the gardens or meadows. When a year old the bird caught a chill in midwinter, when I was in Paris, and began to waste away. I was in great fear of losing it, when it was suggested to me to give it quinine, the bird suffering evidently from fever. I did so, giving for a few days a very small dose rolled in a crumb of bread, and soon it began to recover. The food it takes now is the *pâte Duquesne*, a mixture which is given to pheasants and other birds of the *basse cour* in winter. Apart from that it gets bread and fresh fruit. Its favourite fruit is the banana, for which it shows a predilection during the winter months, and on which its kind live in Africa, so I am told. In summer, in the country, it gets some live crickets, when to be found, and ants' eggs. Although the oriole is very quick in killing wasps when they enter its cage, it does not eat these insects. The oriole is a very clean bird, and rejoices in a bath. When in summer a shower falls, and the bird is put out on the balcony in its big cage, the first thing it does is to open its wings to let the raindrops penetrate its plumage. Then, like a clown, clinging by its feet to the stick, it slowly turns somersaults to receive the raindrops on its chest and lower parts of the body. At present my oriole has a gold and green plumage and ruby eyes. I expect it to change its colour after three years of age into a black and golden plumage. Its song consists in various melodious notes, some in a very high key, and an imitation of the call of the goldfinch, who is its companion in another cage on the same table. I should be glad to learn the experience of somebody else having a caged oriole, this bird being so little known as yet.—B. DE DEDEM.

A PAIR OF TAME LONG-EARED OWLS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Early in May last year my brother and I were out nesting in a large fir wood eight miles west of Wolverhampton, when we saw a bird upon a big nest in a slender fir about 25ft. high. This was easily recognised as a long-eared owl when viewed through field-glasses, though in a very dark part of the wood. With considerable difficulty my brother reached the nest, an old squirrel's drey, upon which were two young birds and a rotten egg. The parent bird was very bold in its attempt to terrify us, and the young hissed and snapped with great vigour, but down they all came in safety. One parent bird was accidentally shot a few days later, so, perhaps, it was a good thing for the owlets that we found them. They were easy to rear, though they were only about a week and ten or twelve days old respectively, one being much smaller and more antiquated in appearance than his brother. They were accordingly named John and Paul, the latter being the smaller. We found that, while still very young, they thrived better on boneless raw meat than on feathery and bony food; but they always had hearty appetites. Like all young owlets, their antics, especially when looking at something, were extremely amusing, and they soon started trying to fly; in this manoeuvre they flap vigorously their future wings, walk unsteadily a few steps and then give a most surprising jump. They land in an ungainly sprawl, and look quite disconcerted at their heroic efforts being greeted with peals of laughter. However, they soon became so proficient in jumping (with the increasing aid of their growing wings) that they spent all available time in getting from one place to another, but always from one level to a higher one; this then became their sole object in life, and their efforts were most interesting to onlookers, whose shoulders and heads were often deemed suitable stages in the upward journey. They were now settled into their future headquarters, a pair of roomy lofts, end to end, and connected by a breach in the wall the size of a low doorway. They never have shown any viciousness or distrust, and are widely known and admired. Their fluffy horns, which they had from the very first, were scratched out some time before their proper ones appeared. We feed them at about 7.30 morning and night, and they always fly to take the pieces out of our hands, and perch there to devour them, coming when we call them even though we are out of sight. We give them pieces of chicken's neck, which they appreciate greatly, the feathers and bones being usually thrown up about nine hours after a meal.

John is extremely expert at catching sparrows which we let loose in the loft; he rarely misses his strike, and often catches them in his claws in mid-air, a very fine feat. After catching he always drops to the ground, and then flies to a corner, pulls the big wing and tail feathers out, and then soon tears it to pieces with great relish! He is also an expert at mice-catching. In the summer, when the sun came streaming in, and made a small hot area of sunlight on the straw, they would flop down into it at midday, and remain with fully-stretched wings and ruffled feathers basking for some minutes. To keep the glare from their eyes they often threw their heads back and their beaks in the air, so that the tips of their horns touched the base of the tail—a good illustration of the extent to which they can turn their necks. They cannot "roll their eyes," but always look straight in front of their faces. In plumage John is somewhat whiter about the breast than Paul, and has more white frill about the face, which is very beautiful. Paul overtook his brother in weight; and we conclude John is a cock and Paul a hen. Paul occasionally gives a sharp barking note when flying, especially if a little frightened, but otherwise they are silent except for a quiet chuckle when stroked; Paul also has a hungry note. They are very fond of hiding away any meat which they do not want at present. They awkwardly hobble to some convenient corner and thrust it down behind any straw there may be there, looking round furtively in hopes that they are not observed. They know very well where the food is kept, under a box. One day one of them managed to extract a large piece of lights and after a good meal hid it away. When we went up to feed them no meat was to be found, and we at once hunted high and low in all the nooks and corners, till at last, on our lifting up an old sack out it fell from one of the folds. They never forget where anything is hidden, fetching it out when hungry and having a good meal. We have them out on Sundays in the garden on strings; they have a favourite perch in a holly tree, and from here they can look out without being dazzled. They are extremely light for their size, only 11oz. or 12oz., though they will grow heavier, to about 1lb. The keepers call them "horny" or "hornet" owls. They were a great source of enjoyment to us during the summer, and all their friends would be very sorry if anything happened to harm them.—W. C. SPACKMAN.

A BLIND GOLDFINCH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I read with interest your correspondent's letter in your issue of February 29th giving an account of his white blackbird. I have a goldfinch that has been blind for the last two years, and her independence is wonderful. She lost first one eye, then the other; they just seemed to disappear. For a time she was dull and quiet, but has long since quite recovered her vivacity. She has a cage to herself, and is perfectly at home in it, lets herself down with the nicest precision to the dish where her hemp-seed is, and when returning to the perch almost seems to count with her bill (as she climbs up with her claws) the number of wires to the desired locality. In one thing she differs from your correspondent's bird—she goes to roost as regularly as all the others in the neighbouring cages and is astir again at the same time. Probably her acute hearing guides her in this.—ALICE BACKHOUSE.

CHANGE OF COLOUR IN BULLFINCH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have a cock bullfinch about eleven years old and very tame. He has always had the run of the table at meal-times. About three years ago, after moulting, he became very dark, entirely losing his fine red breast and the white spot on his rump. His plumage was so altered that he looked more like a dirty sparrow. After moulting last year he regained his original plumage and now has a fine red breast, etc. The only reason I can give for the change is that for years his cage was hung in a small greenhouse, but previous to and after the last moulting he has been placed out of doors and in the sunshine. I have known bullfinches change colour, but they invariably died soon after. I may say he has always had a variety of seeds, including hempseed and plenty of green food. I should be glad to know if anyone has had a like experience.—JOHN BOGGUST.

[We imagine our correspondent's conjecture to be the right one, namely, that it was the change of position and the sunlight which restored the bird to health, provided that our correspondent is sure that there was no change in diet. The darkening of the plumage in a bullfinch, which by no means necessarily portends the end, is generally supposed to result from improper diet, usually an excess of hemp. But we can quite believe that the extra fresh air would be operative.—ED.]

BIRDS SINGING ON THE GROUND.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your very interesting paper is read by us all. There is a thrush in our garden that sings on the ground; also a robin while looking for food. We notice the habits of many birds near us. Our blackbird last year began to sing on April 7th; this year it was March 7th. In 1906 one thrush sang at intervals all December to June. After a great deal of clucking the blackbirds retire to rest fifteen minutes before the thrush, and in the morning they are always a few minutes later in singing.—M. R.

NUTHATCHES IN THE GARDEN.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have for years fed and observed these most interesting little birds, and have noticed they have marked individual tastes for food. At my old home (about a mile from my present one) for five or six years a pair of them nested in a hole in an old walnut tree on the lawn, and by degrees became so tame that as soon as their young could fly they used to bring them daily to a trellis a few feet from the study window and there feed them from a hanging cocoanut—the prettiest sight imaginable. Cocoanuts and Barcelona nuts were the only foods these would touch. For the last two and a-half years I have been living in a house in an old orchard, and have had some difficulty in attracting nuthatches. I could only coax them within 20yds. of the house

at first. Now a pair come to a small table within 3ft. of the window many times a day for food—oddly enough this pair will not touch coconut; their favourites are Barcelona and monkey nuts, sunflower-seed, cheese and fat—the latter they eat out of an old coconut-shell. I have never been able to get nuthatches to touch bread-crumbs. I have a dozen nesting-boxes in trees in the orchard—no perches to them, to prevent sparrows taking possession—inl often for amusement hide nuts in these, and it is astonishing how soon the nuthatches discover I have been round and clear the boxes. They seldom eat the nuts on the spot, but carry them away in rapid succession to some storehouse I have not yet been able to discover—I think in a neighbouring wood. I have placed as much as one pint of mixed Barcelona and monkey nuts on my bird-table and in the boxes during the day, and by the evening they have been all cleared away, except the bad ones, which the nuthatches carefully reject and throw on to the ground, though it is only fair to state that some of the monkey nuts are taken and eaten at once on a neighbouring tree by the blue tits, the coal-tits and the great tits.—MAY WEBB-WARE.

CURIOUS GROWTH OF PRIMROSE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of a peculiar primrose which was found growing among a small bed of common yellow primroses in my garden last week. It will be seen that the yellow flower is surrounded by five green leaves of the ordinary primrose plant, but forming in this case a part of the bloom. The whole of the flowers on this particular root were coming in a similar manner, but the birds appear to have picked out the yellow centre. The bloom on the left is the only other specimen I secure, and that is partly



eaten away. I have never seen anything like this before and think it may be of interest to your readers.—JAMES COSTER, 21, Selwyn Road, Eastbourne.

RIDICULUS MUS!

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have had a very curious incident in connection with the late railway accident at Wembley brought to my notice. The tender of the engine had been raised to the level of the line shortly after the accident, but was allowed to remain exactly as it had been found, except that the upper part was removed. The whole of the front part of the tender was thickly covered with earth. To-day a workman, while closely looking at the tender, noticed a field-mouse buried in the earth still clinging to the tender. This mouse had obviously been killed and scooped up by the tender. The papers were therefore wrong when they said that no loss of life was incurred by the accident—a mouse lost its life. I hope that this curious incident may be of interest to you.—R. B. HOLLAND.

WHO IS TO MILK THE COW?

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—The Montgomeryshire verses on this subject may be very clever, but surely they are somewhat unreasonable. For what do they really amount to? To a complaint that the "lower classes" in agricultural districts are no longer intellectually starved and stunted in the interest of a numerically smaller class. The question, Who is to milk the cow? is simply a part of a much larger question which affects others besides farmers. Who is to do any mental work? The answer is, that if we are not prepared to provide for its being done by others under better conditions and far better pay than heretofore we must do it ourselves. It is absurd to suggest that nobody could be got to milk on any terms. If the terms would render dairy-farming as at present carried on unremunerative it must be

altogether reorganised. Who milks cows in towns? I happen to know that, whoever does it, dairy-farming in and near London is very good business. I suppose the writer of the verses would be horrified at the suggestion that he should milk with his own hands; but it is not so very long since substantial farmers and their families did most of their own milking. I am myself a farmer's son and have milked many times. My brothers, who were brought up to farming, did it regularly.—B.

IN A HORN-BEAM WOOD.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—Here is a photograph of the hornbeam wood of which I gave an account in your issue of February 28th in describing a delightful week spent with the woodman's axe. The light green leaves of the hornbeam in spring, clothing every clump of underwood with a tender, radiant beauty, make the copse a veritable fairyland. The leaves seem to poise on the twigs like tears on the fringe of a woman's eyelids. The primrose has already heralded its appearance by shooting its golden petals above the warm carpet of the pale brown leaves, and the shy anemone furtively peeps out here and there. A badger has been seen to make its way along the banks of the tiny woodland stream spanned by the wooden bridge, but that was some years ago, and nothing more exciting now than a fox finds covert here. The hawfinch is one of the most frequent visitors to the wood. Its visits can be accounted for by its inordinate appetite for the seed of the hornbeam.—F. E. GREEN.



THE SPIRALS ON ANIMALS' HORNS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your correspondent "F. M.'s" query regarding the direction of twist of the trunk corrugations of the sweet chestnut, leads one on to speculate as to the strange laws which govern Nature's twisting of the horns of animals. For instance, all the antelopes and wild goats which have their horns twisted spirally, have the spirals outwards; that is to say, the right horn has a right-handed twist, and the left horn a left-handed one. Domestic goats, on the contrary, have their horns twisted the reverse way—i.e., inwards. Sheep, on the other hand, whether they be wild or domesticated, have inward spirals. Of course there are occasional exceptions to the rule, as anyone may see for himself by looking through the South Kensington Natural History Museum. I have never yet seen any plausible explanation as to why domesticity should have altered the direction of twist of goats' horns. The only possible idea which suggests itself, and that very far-fetched at best, is that domestic goats may have imitated the sheep with which they have been so long associated.—FLOR-DE-LYS.

A TROUT STREAM.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I enclose a photograph, taken by Mr. W. J. Howe, which will catch and hold the eyes of any fisherman among your readers. In meadows like these he has had innumerable good days, spending perhaps a whole morning around the bends shown in the picture, now casting a dry-fly up



stream, or floating one down, accordingly as he can best reach the lurking-place of a trout without being seen. Wet-flies, too, should be deadly where the current enters a pool. In fact, the use of both will result in the heaviest basket on many a day. In spite of this weather there is a feel of spring in the air and, in consequence, a longing to be up and at our friend *Salmo fario*.—P.